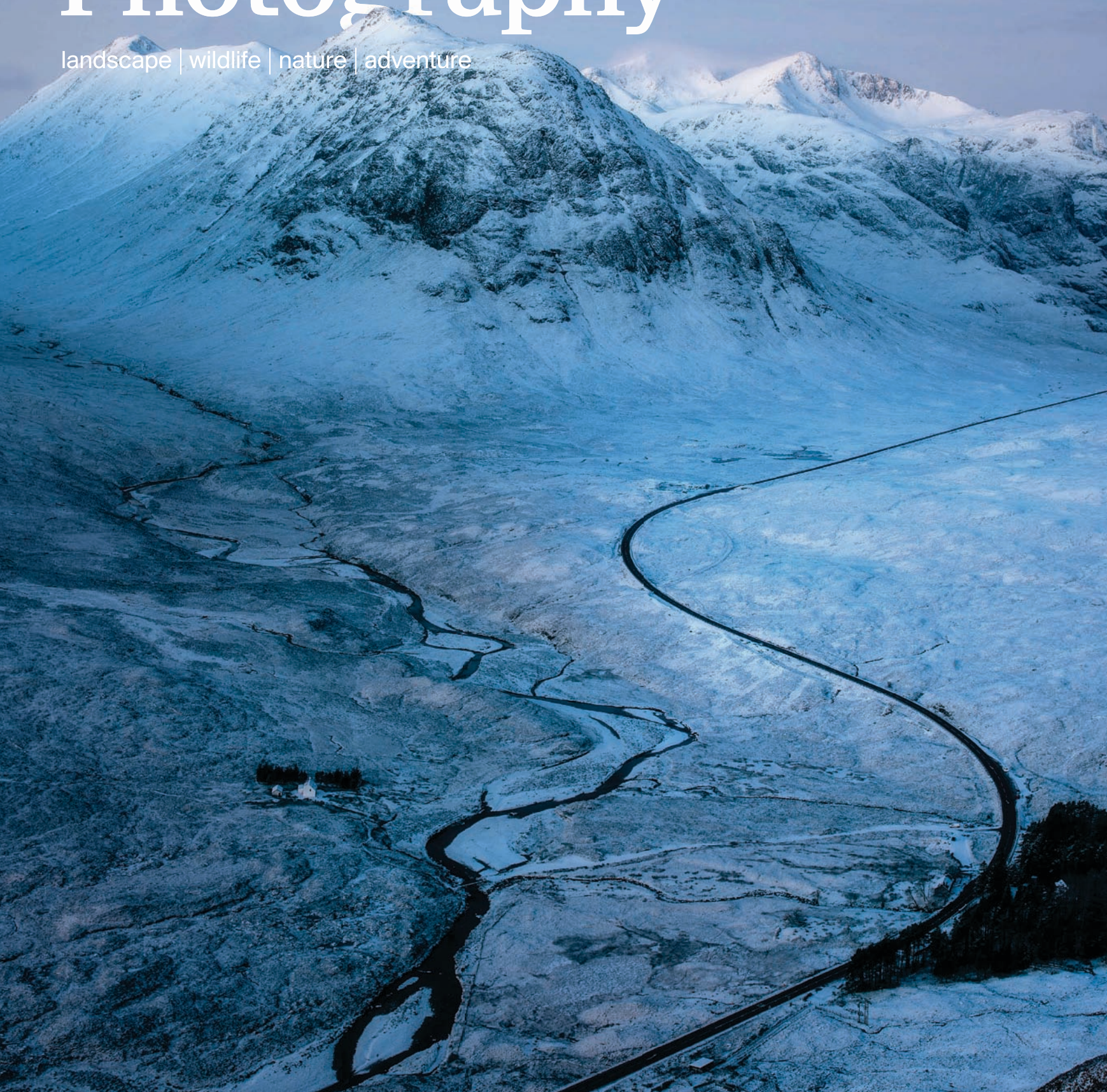


CAPTURE THE ESSENCE OF WINTER

Outdoor Photography

landscape | wildlife | nature | adventure



Toorongo Falls, Noojee



Location: Toorongo Falls, Noojee,
Victoria, Australia

Nikon D810 | Nikkor 14-24mm @ 14mm
ISO 100 | f/18 | 1.3 seconds

LEE Filters SW150 Mark II Filter Holder,
0.9 ND Soft Grad + Circular Polariser

We often face a real challenge when shooting waterfalls, managing the highlights, glare and shiny reflections within a scene requires some careful planning. On this particular occasion I used the LEE SW150 Mark II System with a 0.9 ND soft grad and circular polariser. The polariser dramatically reduced the amount of glare and reflections from the rocks and vegetation, whilst the 0.9 ND soft grad (positioned in the top third of the image) reduced the bright highlights from above, allowing me to use a long enough shutter speed to capture the desired amount of water movement.

When using the polariser for the first time I was blown away by the quality. It cut through the glare and reflections allowing the natural tones in the scene to penetrate through. Yet again my LEE filters provided me with the perfect recipe for capturing beauty effortlessly!



Sarah Hatton
www.iso100.com.au



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leefilters.com

EDITOR'S LETTER

Personal connection

If only I could take images like Galen Rowell. There are numerous ways to first get interested in and inspired by photography, and many people, like myself, are drawn in by discovering the work of another photographer. Galen Rowell was that person for me. I was already shooting images, but on a very casual and unfocused level – simply documenting my travels on a mountain bike. It was seeing Rowell's work and reading about his wholistic approach that fired up my imagination.

The trouble was, no matter how much I studied him, I still couldn't take images like him, and that was deeply frustrating for a while. It was during a shoot in north-west Australia that I started to sense Rowell's positive impact on my own work. As I set about trying to capture the spirit of the remote Aboriginal settlement of Balgo, and the artists that lived there, I realised that rather than trying to take photographs like Rowell's, the lesson I needed to take from him was to begin exploring my own approach, views and motivations and bring those to the images I was taking. That's

exactly what he had done when setting out in his career.

Fortunately, time was on my side at Balgo, as I was spending almost two weeks with the community. So, after a couple of days of frantically seeking images, I relaxed and let the location come to me; the spirit of the place soon revealed itself with this new tack.

Without any predetermined ideas of what I was looking for, I wandered to the edge of the community and sat a while atop the red rock escarpment. Peering into the heat haze, I wondered how I could encapsulate this feeling of isolation into one frame. It seemed that if I walked away in any direction it would lead to my certain death.

Then, far way across the shimmering desert a wild horse walked slowly into the scene, stopped and hung its head, as if defeated by this hostile environment. This was my shot, this was my very own Galen Rowell moment, and it was immensely rewarding to finally realise that personal connection.

Have a great month!

Steve Watkins



GET IN TOUCH

EMAIL Contact the Editor, Steve Watkins, at steve@thegmcgroup.com or Deputy Editor, Claire Blow, at claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com

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COVER IMAGE

Mark Littlejohn took this stunning winter morning photograph, looking down on Altnafeadh below Stob Coire Raineach in Glencoe. Find out how to take your own superb winter images on page 26.

THE ISSUE at a glance



Mark Littlejohn on his refreshing approach to landscape – page 16



Robert Birkby's guide to capturing the magic of winter – page 26



See the winners from Landscape Photographer of the Year – page 65



Andy Luck gets to grips with the new Panasonic DMC-G7 – page 90

IN THE MAGAZINE THIS MONTH...



6

Scott Robertson has lived in the Scottish Highlands all his life, but it was only relatively recently that he began to fully appreciate the outstanding beauty of his surroundings. What started out as a casual pastime recording various hill walks soon became a passion to photograph the land in all its moods and seasons.

[flickr.com/photos/roksoff/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/roksoff/)



16 + COVER

Mark Littlejohn is a hillwalker turned photographer based midway between the Eden Valley and Ullswater in the Lake District. He likes the little view more than the grand vista and his favourite images tend to be those taken during aimless wanderings close to home.

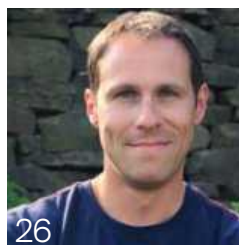
markljphotography.co.uk



22

Pete Bridgwood is a fine art landscape photographer and writer. He is fascinated by the creative foundations of landscape photography and passionate about exploring the emotional elements of the art.

petebridgwood.com



26

Robert Birkby is a landscape and travel photographer based in Yorkshire. He writes for several magazines worldwide and supplies images to the travel and tourism industry.

robertbirkbyphotography.co.uk



32

Doug Chinnery is a professional outdoor photographer. He leads workshops teaching a diverse range of camera skills, writes about photography, and supplies commercial clients worldwide with his images.

dougchinnery.com



40

Colin Bell has spent over 25 years making video games, and now channels that creativity from behind the camera in his beloved Lake District. His work is centred on the healing process of the landscape after industrial intervention.

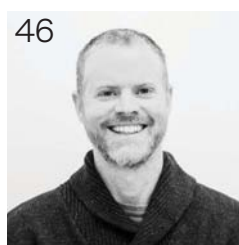
colinbell.photography



42

David Noton regularly shoots for the National Trust, and his other clients include British Airways, Sainsbury's and the *Sunday Times*. He also tours his Chasing the Light Road Show, an inspiring audiovisual presentation.

davidnoton.com



46

Aidan McCormick is a biologist based in Scotland. His work takes him to the remotest locations of the UK, where he moonlights as a landscape photographer. His passion is exploring the west coast of Scotland, and one day he hopes to make it to St Kilda.

maragorm.com



49

Carlton Doudney is a landscape photographer based in Perthshire. As a kitchen-bound chef, he loves getting outside as much as he can. And as a keen mountain walker, the main focus for his photography is in high places, year round.



60

Chris Weston is a professional wildlife photojournalist. He has travelled widely to document the issues and challenges facing many of the world's rarest species, and is the principal photographer for the NGO Animals on the Edge.

chrisweston.photography



81

Richard Shucksmith is fascinated by the natural world and loves being out at all times of the day and night with his camera. He is also a keen diver and underwater photographer. Richard recently collaborated with Brydon Thomason to produce a book called *Otters in Shetland*.

rshucksmith.co.uk



90

Andy Luck is an award-winning wildlife short programme producer, and also an environmental photojournalist with a passion for cameras and photography. His work has been widely published, and he is a regular contributor to *OP*.

wildopeneye.com

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Robert Hatton roberthattonphotography.co.uk, **Bruce Little** brucelittle.net, **Paul Holloway** paulhollowayphotography.co.uk, **Marcus McAdam** portraitsofaland.com, **Graham Lawson** grahamlawson.com, **David Eberlin** davideberlin.uk, **Julia Martin**, **Dan Cook** dan-scape.co.uk, **Nick Smith** nicksmithphoto.com, **Laurie Campbell** lauriecampbell.com, **Steve Young** birdsonfilm.com

Outdoor Photography

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01952 585585
Distribution Seymour Distribution Ltd

Outdoor Photography (ISSN 1470-5400)
is published 13 times a year by GMC Publications Ltd.
86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1XN.
Tel 01273 477374

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Buachaille Etive Mòr

by Scott Robertson

It has been over two years since, driven by curiosity, I first climbed Chrulaiste, the mountain opposite Buachaille Etive Mòr. From high up I was stunned by the grandeur and scale of this Scottish icon. Since then it has been a passion, bordering on obsession, to photograph this scene as I imagined it could be on that wet and windy day in 2013.

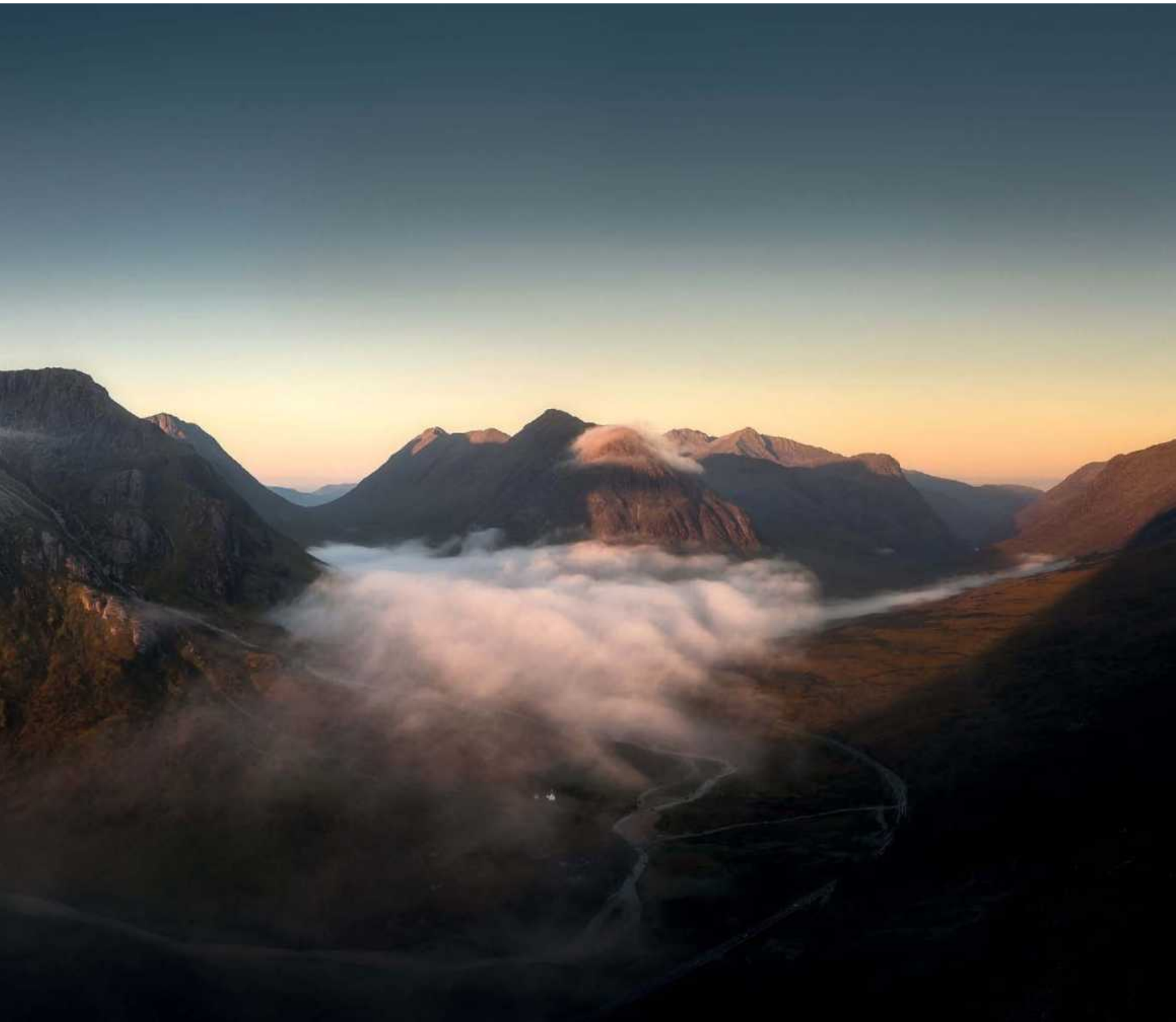
On this particular morning, in October this

year, I was supposed to be somewhere else. Glencoe was swathed in mist though, and I knew this might be my opportunity to realise an ambition; so all plans were abandoned. Time was of the essence; I hadn't factored in sufficient time for a relaxed ascent of Chrulaiste but with a big effort the summit was still possible before sunrise. To my relief I reached the top before the

first light hit the mountain peaks opposite.

The shot is stitched from three exposures to produce a wide panorama, which gives a sense of scale and the presence Buachaille Etive Mòr commands over the glen.

It was so satisfying descending knowing I'd achieved a dream after many failed attempts. *Nikon D600 with 16-35mm f/4 lens at 16mm, ISO 100, 1/40sec at f/9, three images stitched together*



NEWSROOM

CONSERVATION

NEW LAUNCHES

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OTHER NEWS

Support the Pennine Way

A scheme has been set up to encourage the public to contribute to the upkeep of the Pennine Way. One of the UK's most popular and challenging National Trails, the 268-mile route runs through the Peak District, Yorkshire Dales and Northumberland national parks and offers some of the finest upland walking in England, but it also requires intensive annual maintenance.

If you wish to make a donation to support the Pennine Way, or any of the UK's other 13 National Trails, you can do so online at nationaltrail.co.uk.



Wildscreen awarded

Wildscreen has received a World Tourism Award, in recognition of its mission to encourage people to experience the natural world and help protect it. Established 25 years ago, the Bristol-based charity brings together some of the world's best photographers and filmmakers with conservationists to create compelling stories about nature.

The award was accepted by Wildscreen patron, zoologist and broadcaster Dr George McGavin, during a ceremony at the World Travel Market, London, on 2 November. Tusk Trust and the TreadRight Foundation also received the award for their commitment to conservation and sustainable tourism.



Multi-lens Light camera promises DSLR quality images in a pocket-sized package

A camera touted as a pocket-sized replacement for a DSLR is set to hit the shelves next year. The Light L16 is about the same size as a smartphone but packs in 16 individual camera units, each with its own lens set at a fixed focal length – five at 35mm, five at 70mm and six at 150mm. When the shutter is released, up to 10 of the tiny cameras capture an image simultaneously. Using sophisticated computational techniques the Android-powered device then combines the individual shots to create a single image with a resolution of up to 52 megapixels. Because the image information comes from several different focal lengths, and from slightly different perspectives, the camera claims to optimise the final image 'to provide the best possible clarity and virtually eliminate noise, even in the darkest areas of the shot.'

It doesn't stop there, though. Thanks to the multiple camera units, which are just like those found in smartphones, users can adjust the focus and depth of field after the picture has been taken.

In this respect it is comparable to the Lytro Light Field camera, which offers a similar trick by placing an array of lenses on to one image sensor.

Dave Grannan, CEO and co-founder of Light, a US-based startup, said 'Light's vision is to enable anyone to take amazing pictures, and to change the common mindset that quality must come at high cost, a big size and with a steep learning curve.'

While the L16 is considerably smaller than a DSLR, not to mention the fact it dispenses with the need to carry any bulky lenses, at \$1,699 (£1,107) it's not necessarily a cheaper alternative. Whether the camera will prove popular is yet to be seen, but there's a good chance a future generation of smartphones will feature Light's camera modules – Foxconn, the world's largest contract electronics manufacturer, has already licensed the multi-camera image-merging technology for use in mobile devices.

The Light L16 will go on sale in September 2016. If you want to be one of the first to try it out you can pre-order it now at light.co.

CUTTING EDGE

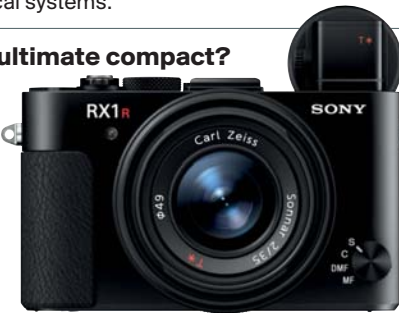
The creators of the Light L16 are not the only ones pushing the boundaries of imaging technology; here are some of the latest exciting developments and camera releases...

Scientists create super-thin lenses

Engineers at the California Institute of Technology are developing ultra-thin lenses that could transform the size of optical devices such as cameras and phones. The new lenses comprise silicon nanopillars that are carefully arranged into a honeycomb pattern to create a 'metasurface'. As well as being super compact – less than a hundredth of the thickness of a human hair – the new lenses can manipulate light in ways that are difficult or impossible to achieve with conventional glass lenses. In addition, the metasurfaces can be combined to create advanced optical systems.

Sony RX1R II: the ultimate compact?

Sony has introduced a new addition to its Cyber-shot range, the full-frame RX1R II. Featuring a 42.2MP sensor and a fixed focal length Zeiss Sonnar T* 35mm f/2 lens, it promises the highest picture quality of any Sony compact camera ever made. It is also equipped with the world's first optical variable low-pass filter that allows users to manually adjust the balance of image resolution and presence of moiré or colour artefacts to match the subject. Other highlights include improved autofocus response speed (30% faster than the original RX1 models) and a retractable XGA OLED viewfinder.



Adobe reveals new vanishing trick

Adobe has unveiled a new camera app that automatically removes tourists and other unwanted elements from photographs. The innovative technology, called Monument Mode, uses an algorithm that can detect moving objects within a scene. It then combines multiple shots to create an image that contains only the unchanged parts of the scene – all before you've released the shutter. The technology was demonstrated in October at Adobe's Max conference in San Francisco – to see it in action, visit outdoorphotographymagazine.com.

Leica launches mirrorless camera

Leica has announced a new mirrorless system camera that aims to rival top-end cameras from the likes of Canon, Nikon and Sony. Promising 'exceptional imaging performance for professional photographers', the Leica SL (Typ 601) features a 24MP full-frame CMOS sensor, ISO 50-50,000, 11fps shooting at full resolution and a built-in electronic viewfinder. It also has some impressive video recording credentials, including 4K UHD at 30fps and mp4 at 120fps in full-frame.

The Leica SL (Typ 601) will be available from 16 November, priced at £5,050 (body only) together with the first of three dedicated lenses, the Vario-Elmarit-SL 24-90mm f/2.8-4 ASPH (£3,150).



AND THE WINNERS ARE...

▶ A stunning image celebrating Japan's sakura (cherry blossom) season, by South African-born photographer Adriaan van Heerden, has won the prestigious ArtGemini Prize 2015. Captured during a morning visit to the Kiyomizu-dera temple complex in Kyoto, the image, entitled Ode to Mortality, shows cherry blossoms floating on a pond over a tree reflection.

Adriaan says his aim was 'to capture something of the essence of sakura season in Japan. The arrival of the sakura (usually in early April) heralds the start of a period of intense celebration followed by reflection on mortality and the transience of beauty.'

This year the ArtGemini Prize, which has been running since 2011, attracted nearly 1,000 entries from 34 countries. artgeminiprize.com



▶ A contemplative image of a shaggy-haired grizzly bear silhouetted against a mountain-lined horizon has won the coveted Judges' Choice award in the Zoological Society of London's fourth annual wildlife photography competition. Andy Skillen captured the winning shot in Alaska's Greater Lake Clark National Park.

A selection of the winning images will be on display at ZSL London Zoo until 28 February 2016. To find out more, and to enter next year's competition, which opens in January, go to zsl.org/about-us/zsl-animal-photography-prize.

Canadian amateur photographer Don Gutoski has been named Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2015 for his image 'A tale of two foxes' (featured in our showcase in OP198). The beautiful but haunting portrait illustrates the struggle for life in the subarctic



climes of Cape Churchill, Canada, where the range of the red fox and the more northern Arctic fox overlap. Chosen from more than 42,000 entries submitted from across 96 countries, Don's image takes centre stage at the Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition at London's Natural History Museum, until 10 April 2016. Find out more at nhm.ac.uk.

THE BIG VIEW



© Evgenia Arbugaeva - courtesy of the Photographers' Gallery



EXHIBITIONS

1 **Evgenia Arbugaeva: Arctic Stories**

» 6 November to 16 January
» The Photographers' Gallery, London

The Arctic is often portrayed as one of the most inhabitable places on Earth, one that is harsh in both its environment and way of life of its inhabitants. For Siberian photographer Evgenia Arbugaeva, however, this part of the world has other connotations: for her it's connected to storytelling, childhood nostalgia and a sense of the romantic. At the Photographers' Gallery this winter, two of her projects, *Weather Man* and *Tiski*, will be on show.

The first project, *Weather Man*, depicts the isolated life

of 63-year-old meteorologist Vyacheslav Korotki. Based in a remote Arctic outpost in northern Russia, he has only his thoughts and the vast landscape that surrounds him for company. While spending two weeks with Korotki, Arbugaeva produced a series of intimate portraits depicting his day-to-day life. Her sophisticated use of light and colour often gives the images a painterly approach, yet they are still firmly rooted in realism and are a moving and powerful documentary of one man's relationship with the natural world.

The second series is the more personal of the two for Arbugaeva. Deciding to produce a project about her experience of returning to

her hometown *Tiski* in 2010, Arbugaeva sets to reclaim her childhood memories through a series of imaginative photographs. Through the character *Tanya*, a representation of the photographer's younger self, we see Arbugaeva narrate the girl's playful adventures in and around the community.

It's clear in both of these series that Arbugaeva is doing something unexpected with the documentary genre: she is photographing something real while also creating a dreamlike, surreal atmosphere in the pictures to emphasise her or her subjects' feelings and emotions. At only 30 years old, Arbugaeva's work to date is impressive, imaginative and different – it's exciting to think

about what her future projects may hold.

thephotographersgallery.org.uk

2 **Don McCullin: Conflict, People, Landscape**

» To 31 January
» Hauser and Wirth, Somerset

Seminal photojournalist Don McCullin once said: 'The love affair I've had with photography has been total commitment and I've not taken any shortcuts to do it.' Looking at the photographs in his new retrospective *Conflict, People and Landscape*, McCullin's unfailing dedication to capture the stories he sees is clear. Starting with his social documentary of deprived areas in north London to unsparing war reportage, the show also includes McCullin's landscapes and still-lives. Moving away from documentary in the past twenty years or so, much of McCullin's more recent photography is shot closer to home, in Somerset; he often refers to the area's sweeping rural landscapes as his greatest salvation.

hauserwirthsomerset.com

ADVENTURE TALKS

What a life! An illustrated talk by Simon and Carol Trapnell

» 26 November

» *Nature in Art*, Gloucestershire

Director and founder of Gloucester's *Nature in Art* museum, Simon Trapnell joins his wife Carol to share their stories of fascinating people they have met on their travels. From Bolivia to Ethiopia, the Yemen to Lladakh and Kenya to Siberia, Simon and Carol have seen an array of places, cultures and nature. Ideal for those who want to be inspired by travel, this is bound to be an evening full of thrilling adventure accounts.

Tickets are £8 and can be reserved at natureinart.org.uk

A Balkan Adventure, Five Months in the Mountains: John Pilkington FRSGS

» 26 November

» *Victoria Halls Helensburgh*, Argyll and Bute

Spending five months in 2013 exploring the Balkan mountains, John Pilkington relives some of his most thrilling experiences during this evening talk. Visiting cities in Bosnia and Kosovo as well as remote villages in Albania and Bulgaria, Pilkington found out from the people their country's history. With insightful commentary and stunning photography throughout the talk, this is one event not to be missed.

Non-member tickets are £8 on the door. Full details at rsgs.org

EXHIBITIONS WITH A DIFFERENCE

Bloom

» To 6 December

» Natural History Gallery, Horniman Museum and Gardens, London

Edward Chell's delicate artworks of plant silhouettes are paintings on gesso panels – a material that shows no brush marks and gives a soft, consistent finish. Looking at the Horniman Museum's collection of rare books by 19th-century naturalist and early photographer Anna Atkins for inspiration, Chell has chosen a midnight blue colour for his series to give them a similar look to cyanotype prints – a popular photographic technique during Atkins' time. The 40 pictures in the Bloom exhibition give insight into how photography, nature, history and modern painting techniques can be fused together to powerful effect.

horniman.ac.uk



© Edward Chell



© National Media Museum

Insect wings, circa 1840, by William Henry Fox Talbot

Revelations: Experiments in Photography

» 20 November to 3 February

» National Media Museum, West Yorkshire

Showing some of the earliest photographs since the medium's inception in 1839, the new show at Bradford's National Media Museum highlights how science has aided art and vice-versa. The main part of the display is work by Victorian scientific photographers (such as William Henry Fox Talbot and Eadweard Muybridge) who experimented to capture known phenomena that was still invisible to the human eye – such as electricity and radiation. Following on are other pioneers in the field, such as Man Ray, Berenice Abbott and Harold Edgerton. This is an exhibition to ingite the imagination and see how pushing the boundaries of photography can lead to innovative results.

nationalmediamuseum.org

Stranded: Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey

» 18 November to 16 January

» Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Ceredigion

Using an object to represent issues relating to climate change, Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey have placed a six-metre long minke whale skeleton encrusted with ice-like alum crystals in Aberystwyth Arts Centre. Relating to how human-induced changes in the chemistry of the oceans and the threat it has to marine life, this piece is a powerful and spectacular yet unsettling sight.

aberystwthartscentre.co.uk

STARGAZING EVENTS

Take advantage of the dark skies this winter season and enjoy the array of evening stargazing sessions taking place around the UK. Here are six astronomical events to inspire you...

Perseids over Kielder



© Gary Fildes – courtesy of Forestry Commission England

Starry Skies

» 13 December, 9.30pm to 12.30am

» Hamsterley Forest, County Durham

Join astronomer Simon Rowland at Hamsterley Forest, the new go-to dark sky destination in County Durham, for one of the most spectacular celestial events of the year: the geminid meteor shower.

Tickets are £6. To book, go to forest.gov.uk

Astrophotography night

» 8 December, 8 to 11pm

» Kielder Observatory, Northumberland

If you want a hands-on introduction to astrophotography then this event at the Kielder Observatory is for you. Try out their telescopes and take pictures of the planets, our moon and even deep sky objects with their specialist cameras. You can also find out how to use your own equipment to photograph the night sky.

Tickets are £20.35 from kielderobservatory.org

Christmas Stargazing at the National Park Visitor Centre

» 11 December, 7.30 to 11pm

» Brecon Beacons National Park

Senior lecturer in astronomy Martin Griffiths will begin this dark sky event with a presentation on the geminid meteor shower. Visitors will then have a virtual tour of the night sky and, if weather permits, Griffiths will use a specialised telescope and binoculars to help you spot the meteors.

Tickets are £12. To book, call 01874 623366

An Evening with the Stars

» 18 and 19 December, hourly intervals from 5.25pm

» Royal Observatory Greenwich, London

The place that played a key role in the history of astronomy and navigation has An Evening with the Stars. During this one-hour session you'll watch a planetarium show, look through an 18-tonne Victorian telescope and stand on the Prime Meridian of the world chatting to astronomers.

Tickets are £18. To book, go to rmg.co.uk

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» Scottish Dark Star Observatory, East Ayrshire

Situated on a hilltop in Dalmellington, on the edge of the Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park, the Scottish Dark Star Observatory is one of the best places in the UK to see planets, moons, asteroids and other celestial objects. You'll be able to look through the observatory's two telescopes.

Tickets are £12. To book, go to scottishdarkskyobservatory.co.uk

OUT THERE

IN PRINT

India

Steve McCurry

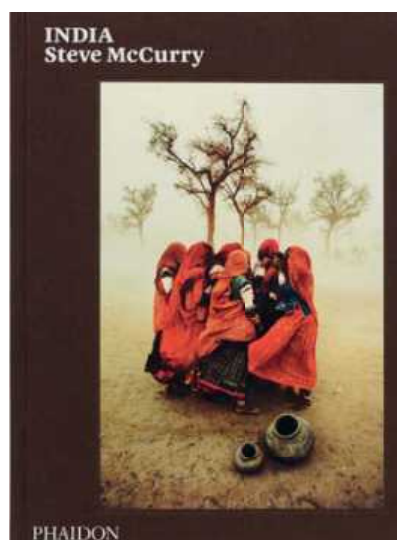
» Phaidon

» 9780714869964

» Hardback, £39.95

BOOK
OF THE
MONTH

Be it the photograph of a steam engine against the backdrop of the Taj Mahal, the Afghan girl portrait featured on the front cover of *National Geographic*



© Steve McCurry

magazine or a group of women huddling together before a desert dust storm hits, almost anyone interested in photography will immediately be able to conjure up a Steve McCurry picture when they hear his name.

His latest book includes 96 pictures taken across the Indian subcontinent throughout his 35-year career. Having

visited India some 80 times or so, McCurry gives a genuine panorama of the country, capturing its wealth of culture and the extreme contrasts that lie within its society. The book's large format and excellent reproduction means McCurry's distinctive, vivid colour style is celebrated here in all its glory.

above Rajasthan, 1996. Crowd carries a man during the Holi festival.



Wild Cats of the World

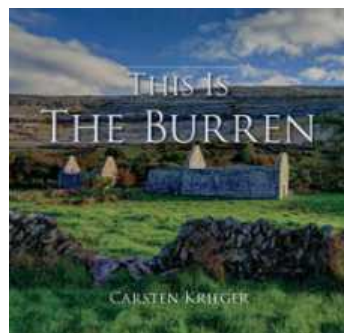
Luke Hunter

» Bloomsbury

» 9781472912190

» Hardback, £25

Luke Hunter is one of the leading names in wildcat conservation, so when he releases a book on the species it's sure to



garner attention. Profiling all 38 species of the cat family in depth, Hunter draws upon his previous research into scientific studies as well as his own observations in the field. With stunning photography illustrating each section, a strong ethos threaded throughout is the ever-growing threats to endangered wild cats, and how we can save them. A powerful portrait of these amazing animals, *Wild Cats of the World* should be on any wildlife photographer or enthusiast's bookshelf.

This is the Burren

Carsten Krieger

» The Collins Press

» 9781848892514

» Hardback, £17.99

An established and well-respected figure in the landscape photography world,

Carsten Krieger's latest book matches up to the standard of his 10 previous impressive titles. Again focusing on Ireland's beautiful wilderness, Krieger spent the best part of five years photographing the Burren – a national park in County Clare, west Ireland – which he lives near to. When he first started the project, Krieger thought it would be an extended landscape portfolio, but it has evolved into an in-depth profile of the place. As well as evocative landscape images we see pictures of the local people, trades, geological formations and native flora and fauna, as well as information about the area's folklore. The wide range of subjects does mean it's an eclectic mix, but the overall message is coherent: this is an area rich in natural beauty, heritage and culture.

FIVE MINUTES WITH... KYM AND TONYA ILLMAN

Photography duo Kym and Tonya Illman offer a contemporary look at wildlife in their latest book *Africa on Safari*. Encouraging us to put the long lens to one side and embrace a new digital mindset (one full of drones, buggies and other advanced camera kit), Kym and Tonya show that you don't need to view wildlife from the backseat. We talk to them to find out more about their cutting edge approach to photography...

OP What are you trying to engage people in when they look at *Africa on Safari*?

KYM ILLMAN I hope that readers will be inspired to go on an African safari. For 20 years I said no to the idea, thinking I'd find it boring. When my wife Tonya told me she had booked flights to South Africa and that I was to handle the rest, I bought a handful of African wildlife photography books and quickly became enamoured with the photographic opportunities that would be on offer.

OP Captions accompany each image to give the viewer more of a background to the shot; how important do you think the story behind the picture is for wildlife photography?

KI I believe captions are vital – take our 'lion selfie' picture for example: everyone who sees this wants to know what transpired in the moments before and after the lion touched the camera with its paw. It's a unique image and, as such, you'd expect there to be an interesting story behind how it was captured. While a percentage of professional photographers understandably won't reveal the secrets behind their images, we don't make a living from photography so are more than happy to share our techniques.

OP The documentary shots of the animals interacting with the technology you use are interesting. How did they react to the drones, buggies and camera traps?

KI Lions are the most intrigued by the camera buggy, the sub-adults approach it with much enthusiasm the moment they spot it. Adult males are generally not that interested, although a large male at a private game park in South Africa put his teeth through the rear screen of a Canon EOS 5D MkIII we had left on a tripod. Leopards and cheetahs are not usually interested, although on our travels we came across two young leopards who were more than keen to investigate it, resulting in some great images. Elephants steer clear of the buggy but are fine with buried cameras and often sniff them to ensure they're not a threat. We've also taken great photos from the buggy of wild dogs, hyenas, buffalos and hippos (the best being the book's cover shot), but have never had any interest from crocodiles, zebras, impala, eland or giraffes.

OP As well as being successful wildlife photographers you both own an audio production business in your hometown Perth, Australia. What is your relationship to photography?

KI We've always been keen photographers owning top quality equipment. I spend my weekends in Lancelin, a coastal town 90 minutes north of Perth, and would spend three hours a day on the weekends photographing around the town. I always wanted to be a painter but a lack of ability curtailed that dream, so photography was a great alternative.



Before we went on our first safari I decided to buy a range of new kit. After that holiday, I went overboard looking for equipment that would allow me to get unique and high quality images. I had the buggy built, bought a quadcopter, water housing, remote triggers and had fake rocks made to hide cameras in.

OP Do you find taking time out to travel to a faraway location enhances your photography more than taking pictures closer to home?

TONYA ILLMAN When you spend 10 to 12 hours a day for 14 to 28 days photographing wildlife, you improve rapidly – this total immersion allows you to learn from mistakes quickly.

OP There are particular moments you have documented that some may find hard to look at, such as jackals chasing a gazelle while it's giving birth. Why did you feel it's necessary to include these pictures?

TI This is what happens in the wild, it's not a petting zoo. Showing confronting images like this and explaining why these things happen can open people's eyes to the harsh world these animals live in. The series of shots of the jackal and the gazelle is amazing: for a start you will rarely see this behaviour and, secondly, getting the shot is difficult. We were travelling at about 40km per hour over very bumpy ground to keep up with the chase. We were about 50m away so I needed a long lens and had to shoot at a very fast shutter speed to get a sharp shot. I've done walking safaris in Zimbabwe where, as a precaution, the guide will often have his rifle ready when an elephant gets too close to us. Normally the animal will move away when the guide talks to it, but on one occasion an elephant approached to about 10m. From just behind our guide, I took a photo of him aiming his gun at the elephant while still talking to it. The editor and I finally agreed it was probably too confronting, hence why it was cut.



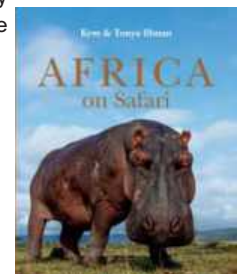
Africa on Safari is out now

Kym and Tonya Illman

» Papadakis

» 9781906506568

» Hardback, £30



Your letters

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LETTER
OF THE
MONTH

Moments of happiness

I see so many outstanding photographs in *OP* that I sometimes become disillusioned because I do not believe I could ever take shots of such a high standard. So it was timely to read Chris Weston's article, A photographer's guide to life on Earth (OP198), as it reminded me that there is as much joy in the process of taking a photograph as there is in the end result. How many times have I been downbeat just because the light did not turn out as expected, and then fail to simply enjoy being outdoors?

It also reminded me of when I used to fish, because I was terrible at it! The nature of fishing, however, just like photography, makes you stop

and take in what's around you. If I didn't catch anything it did not matter because staying still for a while made me really take in a scene – not only the light, but also the sounds around me and the wildlife that I would have missed or scared off had I just been passing through.

As I reflected on this, I looked up for the umpteenth time at a photo I took of Brixham harbour while on holiday. Much as I know it won't win any prizes, I remembered the fun I had taking it and how photography enabled me to record that moment of happiness for me to enjoy forever, and this reminds me why I love this hobby of photography so much.

Mark Murton, Wallington

13 images you chose to print. Rather, it seemed that smoothing the water to various degrees was the key requirement – at least eight of the 13 fell into this category. Is this getting too much of a fashion? Not that I totally dislike it, and indeed I do sometimes shoot that way myself. I will admit too that I write as a disappointed entrant – of the three images I sent you, one had ice, one had reflections and one had both! But, my own images apart, I do wonder if there could have been more variety in the ones that you chose.

Ian McColl, Liverpool

Ed's comment *Hi Ian, thanks for entering the competition and sorry that your images weren't selected this time. I hope it helps to know you are not alone: our monthly competitions are fiercely competitive! We always aim and feel it's fair to select the best images that are on theme, rather than trying to achieve a balance across all the possible interpretations that we receive.*

200 issues of OP

Around 1998, as an enthusiastic member of Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, I went to their annual general meeting in Devizes, which included a slide show by their main photographer, Steve Day. I was swept away by the quality and range of the pictures, and after his talk I asked if he did shows for photography clubs. 'I'm willing to start anytime after my honeymoon,' was the reply, and in due course we arranged for him to visit my local club. He went down so well that I almost immediately booked him in again for the following year. This is when I first heard about *Outdoor Photography*. Steve told us about his involvement in a great new magazine that was about to be launched, and was looking for subscribers. I did as I was told, and from issue number one right up until now I've had the pleasure of the package being pushed through my letterbox each month, and I've enjoyed and learnt from the great variety of articles. Tragically,

Steve died of cancer in 2003, ending a treasured friendship for me, but also of course ending his regular feature in each issue.

With the arrival of issue number 198 this week, I wondered if you have any idea how many people have followed the magazine from the beginning and will be celebrating 200 issues with you!

John Hankin, via email

Ed's comment *An excellent question, John! You are part of a very special group of OP readers. We don't know exact numbers (around 40 or so we think) but we regularly hear from readers who have been with us from the very first issue. I'm sure Steve was proud to know he inspired you so much with his talk. Enjoy OP200!*

Time to reflect?

For August's 'One thing this month' competition you encouraged us to think about both ice and reflections. But neither of these appeared among the

Swallow frenzy

Further to publishing '8 bird migration hotspots' (Nature Zone, OP197), you may be interested to hear of my recent experience at home. I live on the North Downs, near the Kent-Surrey border. My bungalow sits on land that was originally my great-grandfather's smallholding, which comprises a wooded front bank, an orchard and wildflower meadow areas. I encounter amphibians and reptiles, plus badgers, foxes, roe deer and bats. I also see 25% of British butterfly species and 45 species of bird.

At lunchtime on 21 September I saw unusually high numbers of swallows through my kitchen window. The sky above Biggin Hill valley seemed to be filled with them flying south. After the first wave diminished, several more waves appeared. My initial estimate of a few hundred birds on migration changed to several thousand. The forecast was for a low-pressure front to bring wet weather from the north; half an hour later torrential rain blocked the view across the valley. I'm sure they had been driven across Greater London by the weather.

Alan Baker, Westerham

December's letter of the month winner, Mark Murton, receives a one-year subscription to the Acronis True Image Cloud, worth £64.95

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 **WHITE WALL**

IN CONVERSATION WITH
Mark Littlejohn

Lake District landscape photographer Mark Littlejohn spends his life living in the here and now. His style is one of straightforward, uncomplicated beauty, and his artistic ambitions remain rooted in simply portraying the landscape he loves...

Interview by Nick Smith



above Ghost Birch. *right* The Island.







left The S-Bend. above The Extrovert.

Mark Littlejohn is, to say the least, a laid-back character. He doesn't advertise his work and his website is 'just one of those off-the-shelf things' that he only infrequently updates. 'It's just there really to display one or two of my images that I quite like. You know what photographers are like: we go nuts for an image today and can't stand it tomorrow.' He's never really had a business head for photography or self-promotion. And he seems to be more than happy with that.

Scottish by birth, Littlejohn lives in the Lake District. Based in Penrith, he describes himself as a northerner on his 'second life'. A former police detective who once spent his days as a computer forensics expert breaking paedophile rings, these days he's happier dividing his life between taking photographs and working on the Ullswater steamboats, conducting tours around one of England's most beautiful lakes.

Littlejohn has always been interested in walking in the Romantic landscapes of the Lakes. But it wasn't until 2010

that he invested in his first single lens reflex. A comparative newcomer to the trade, the 50-something photographer describes how he became 'ridiculously hooked on trying to capture what was in my head, as opposed to straightforward reproductions of what was in front of me.'

What was in front of him was a tranquil, mystical and ethereal world that seemed to be light years away from his previous life. 'I sometimes try to analyse this and wonder if the way that I photograph today is a direct result of looking at things that were horrible in the past. I am aware that a lot of people say to me that my work contains a little bit of mystique or even the surreal. But there really has never been any conscious effort put into producing that kind of image. But I do accept that these days I am more capable of finding beauty in the landscape: the relationship between the trees and the hills. It's hard to quantify, really.'

What Littlejohn finds more interesting than comparing today with yesterday is the slightly more complex question of whether



above Rydal. opposite, left Tree. opposite, right Belle of the Ball.

he should have become a photographer when he was much younger. 'Had I taken up photography years ago it may well be I would have ended up taking straight representations of the landscape in front of me, without seeing the inner beauty hidden within a scene.'

Anyone who's ever read the great Romantic poets – especially the Lake poets – or read those fantastic 19th-century novels about the British countryside will immediately recognise the landscape of Littlejohn's world. Early morning mists drift through copper coloured autumn trees, and the world is decorated with bluebells and poppies. 'Yes, my photographs do tend to evoke a nostalgic spirit: the feeling of a Britain that is in our heads. There's a certain wistfulness about it, which I think is perhaps the way people would like to see the country today.' But Littlejohn is also keen to point out that what is on the computer screen is what he sees when he is out with his camera. What this means is that when he roams the Lake District he is looking for shots of 'atmosphere and mood.'

Although he does shoot in monochrome when inspired

to do so, and is equally at home in this genre, Littlejohn says that he is predominantly a colour photographer. When it comes to deciding whether it is a black & white or colour day, he can't put his finger on how the process unwinds in his mind: 'I haven't a clue how it happens.' But the one thing that he is keen to point out is that he doesn't convert colour pictures to black & white in a last-ditch attempt to rescue an image when the colour hasn't quite worked. 'It's an instinctive, or intuitive, feeling where you can, on the spur of the moment, have a look at the picture in black & white and suddenly think that you like it. Black & white emphasises the simplicity of composition.'

While shooting these days mostly in colour, he doesn't find himself very attracted to sunrise and sunset images, for the simple reason that 'if you overdo colour, all people see is the colour itself, and they won't see the composition. I think this is why I shoot soft hues and only when the light is right. Light is key for me. I know that other photographers can go out in flat light, which enables them to concentrate on different things. But, by and large, it's the soft light that I need, with the early

morning mists. And that makes me very condition-dependent.'

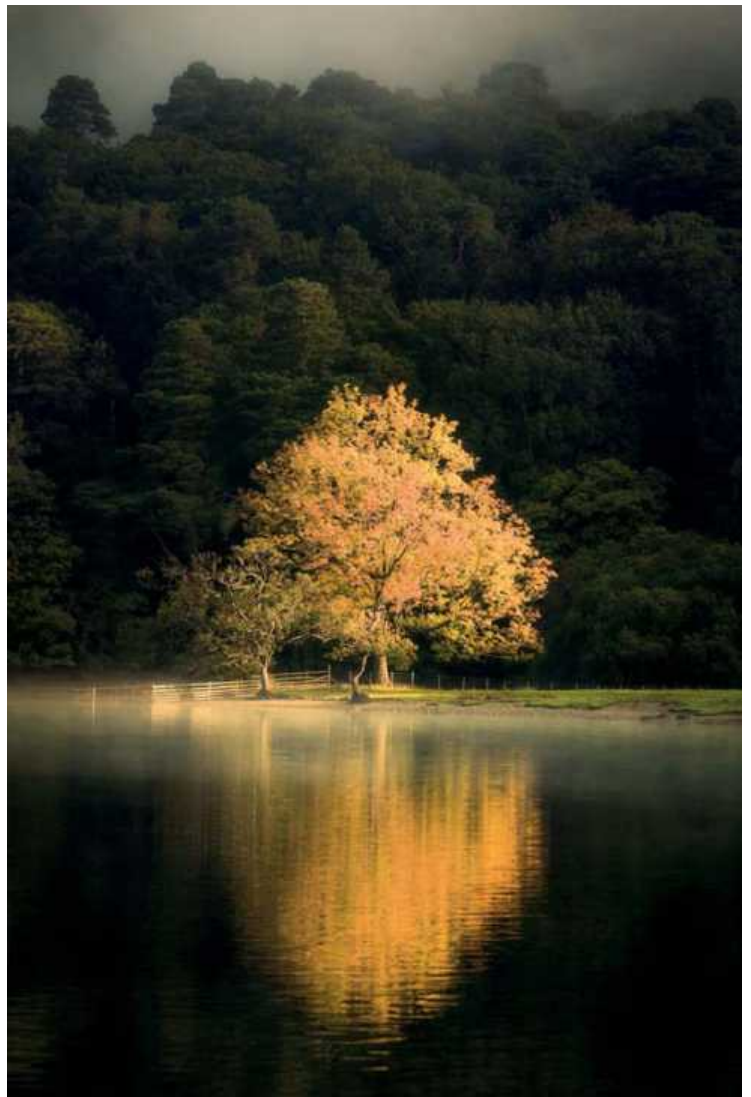
This dependency on a specific type of light means that there can be long periods of low productivity. 'I don't tend to work that well in summer, I have to say. But then again, it's hard to say when I do work best. I would suggest that perhaps September, October and November are my favourite months.' Having said that, Littlejohn is also of the opinion that landscape photography is about the landscape and not about what day the calendar tells you that it is. 'You've got to try to appreciate the landscape all year round. I was taking photographs on the boats the other day: it was pretty nasty. It was wet. It was rainy. But the ferocity of the scene meant that it was actually wonderful. I was taking one or two pictures and this lady came up on deck and asked me why I was photographing when the weather was so miserable. And I really did feel like saying that it wasn't the weather that was miserable, but that she was. People tend to think that photographs can only be wonderful when the weather is wonderful. But I just enjoy being out there.'

Littlejohn is nothing if not plainspoken and he tells me that he has absolutely zero interest in discussing the technicalities of equipment and the techniques involved with taking photographs. 'All this stuff about having the latest cameras, tripods and filters... not interested. You read all about image blending, focus stacking and all that. But I think sometimes we get so tied up in the technique and equipment that we forget why we are landscape photographers. We should be doing this

because we love being out there capturing little snippets and brief moments in time.' An analogy that Littlejohn likes to use when he is giving seminars on photography is that as an ex-audiophile he was once extremely motivated by the expense and quality of his hi-fi equipment. But, 'at the end of the day, you've got to remember what this equipment is for. There is only one point to owning a hi-fi, and that is to kick off your shoes and listen to the music. If you're a landscape photographer there is only one reason why you bought the camera in the first place: and that's because you love the landscape.'

Which means that for Mark Littlejohn very little is going to change in the future. He's going to carry on shooting the pastel-infused landscapes that he loves so much. 'I'm not looking to achieve immortality through what I'm doing. But I do sometimes think that it would be quite nice to leave something behind.' But surely there must be a big project up his sleeve for the future? 'Not really. And that's because I have this fear that working on a project would inhibit the production of work that I want to produce.' He goes on to explain how 'just the other day I took a picture of a reflection of a birch tree, where the water was almost still, but there was a slight swirl. And it was fantastic. That's what I like doing. As soon as you start putting constraints and guidelines on what you're doing, then the spontaneity and the luck of the moment goes away.'

To see more of Mark's work visit markljphotography.com





An enduring fascination with the black & white landscape work of Fay Godwin leads Pete Bridgwood to the Outer Hebrides in search of his own interpretation of her style

Ultimately any landscape photograph is a function of the photographer's interaction with the scene, and the viewer's interpretation of that interaction. If we consider the photographer's involvement and the degree to which their style is imparted, most landscape images can be placed somewhere along a spectrum of reality ranging from a literal documentary representation at one end, with minimal interference from the photographer and little apparent creative intent; to creatively rich dreamscapes at the opposite extreme, where there are no rules and emotive expression reigns.

The most influential works of our favourite landscape masters are presented in exhibitions or books, and such collections are often tightly themed. Consequently, we can easily be seduced into striving for a more restricted style in our own work, believing that following a similar

strategy is a way of improving. When working on specific projects this can be invaluable, but for any other purpose it is usually counterproductive.

For photographers working at the creative end of the reality spectrum it can be rewarding to experiment with more documentary styles. The greatest challenge is to stay true to our subject, creating an honest portrayal, while still allowing some stylistic flavouring. Black & white images are particularly suited to such projects because they allow greater emphasis in post-processing without becoming so obviously exaggerated; and, of course, they also have a rich visual heritage.

I recently spent a week in the Outer Hebrides retracing the steps of Fay Godwin. I was introduced to her work when a photographer friend gifted me one of her wonderful books in the mid-80s. Those magical black & white landscapes bestowed iconic status on many of today's favourite honey-pot locations. Godwin's

style had a huge impact on me and remains mesmerising. A single image would often span the entire spectrum from documentary realism to creative fine-art landscape; it was enchanting.

My own stylistic preferences usually lean heavily towards the colourful dreamscape end of the spectrum, and I'll often spend many hours fine-tuning an image in Lightroom before I'm happy to hang it in the gallery. But for our South Harris shoot, I wanted to investigate Godwin's subject matter: rural documentary with a sense of narrative and a dash of my own flavouring.

Allowing ourselves complete creative freedom to experiment in other styles offers a productive progression to ultimate artistic fulfilment.

above Scarista, South Harris, Outer Hebrides.
 Fujifilm X-T1 with Fujinon XF 10-24mm f/4 R IOS lens
 at 10mm, ISO 800, 1/15sec at f/22, Lee Seven5
 polariser, two-stop ND grad, handheld

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WINTER PHOTO WONDERLAND

Robert Birkby's guide to making the most of the chilly season

How to capture stunning winter photographs

Myriad spectacular photographic opportunities await those willing to brave the cold and head out into the landscape in winter. Robert Birkby shows you how to photograph this magical season

The unpredictability of British winter weather certainly makes life interesting for landscape photographers. The last few winters have provided no end of extreme meteorological events in the form of gales, rain, fog and snow, and this drama is what makes the season so rewarding to photograph. Venturing out for hours at a time in winter can be uncomfortable, so it's worth investing in some good quality clothing, but

the rewards are that the landscape is quite literally seen in a different light. The winter sun being lower in the sky means softer light with longer shadows, and of course frost and snow transform the scenery into a wonderland. Tourist hotspots and popular locations such as those in national parks are often much quieter than at other times of the year. The shorter days also mean less disruption to your sleep – surely a bonus!



SNOW IN THE LANDSCAPE

For those of us not blessed with spectacular scenery or a national park on our doorstep, snow can be a revelation. A blanket of the white stuff combined with good light can turn an ordinary scene into one of great beauty. The problem we have in the UK is that snowfall is infrequent and unpredictable. Sometimes, however, things work out perfectly, and there's nothing like the feeling of expectation and anticipation when you're the first photographer out in freshly fallen snow.

So what are we looking for in a winter scene? The good news is that simplicity is key, so it's a case of finding a focal subject or a leading line to draw the eye into the scene. We're usually trying to convey the stark beauty of the landscape, so have a look for any potential in the form of a wall, a country lane, trees or even blades of grass poking through the snow, for example. When seeking out areas that show promise, watch your footsteps and think before trampling all over that perfect blanket of snow! For telephoto shots, this is less relevant, of course, but sometimes your perception of a scene can alter as the sun changes direction. The raking winter light picks out details in the snow, and if you decide to fit a wideangle lens there's nothing worse than realising you've just trampled all over the best composition. As with most aspects of scenic landscape photography in sunlight,

those magic hours either side of sunrise and sunset are the most fruitful. A composition involving warm light on cool snow is a classic combination, and the effect has intrigued and inspired artists since long before the camera was invented. While we want to make sure the shadows are evident in order to display those lumps and bumps in the snow, positive exposure compensation is usually required to prevent the camera rendering snow as a mid-grey tone instead of white.

above
My main aim here was to use the soft winter light to enhance the gentle shapes in the snowdrifts.
Canon EOS 5D MkII with 16-35mm lens at 16mm, ISO 100, 1/8sec at f/16, 0.6 ND grad, tripod



left
Sheep are a part of the landscape in Yorkshire. Despite the lack of direct sunlight, it was possible to capture the warm tones of their wool to contrast with the cool tones of the snow.
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 70-200mm lens at 135mm, ISO 100, 1/400sec at f/6.3, ND grad, tripod

FROST AND ICE

Being out at first light and in the crisp air on frosty mornings is a magical experience, with the icy ground crunching underfoot. It's essential to be out early on clear mornings, as the sun will usually have enough strength to melt the frost within a couple of hours of sunrise. Frost provides both scenic and close-up image opportunities, so head out with an open mind.

Light ground frost tends to mute the colours of the landscape a little, in the same way a dusting of snow can, and such images tend to have delicate, bright, pastel tones. On these mornings it's worth trying to photograph larger vistas to show off these pastels in a broader context.

Hoar frost is an even more spectacular occurrence. It happens when water droplets similar to dew cover surfaces at sub-zero

temperatures and form ice crystals, 'painting' all surfaces white. When photographed against a blue sky this can look very striking, and colour and contrast can be enhanced by using a polariser filter. Take care here, though; sometimes the effect is too strong and the sky can become almost black.

Many standard and telephoto zoom lenses will enable you to get in reasonably close for some detail shots of ice and frost, but in such situations a dedicated macro lens really comes into its own. Have a close look at frost crystals and try and get as close as possible with a macro – the intricate details are amazing. Remember to hold your breath so you don't melt the frost, and use a tripod and cable release, and engage mirror lock-up. In the depths of winter it's worth seeking out valleys or areas surrounded by hills, where the sun will not rise high enough to reach the frost. If the air temperature remains low enough, the frost can last long into the day, so save these locations for later after you've experimented with the direct, early sunlight.

On sub-zero days without frost, have a look



at ice patterns and colours in frozen puddles, ponds and around waterfalls or streams. With puddles, seek areas of colour rather than uninteresting slabs of white; the blue reflection of the sky, for example, or leaves trapped inside the ice. Puddles in fields with trees nearby are therefore most likely to hold some interest. Unlike bigger landscapes, which can be photographed over and over again by anyone who happens to visit the area, your detail images of frost and ice are likely to be unique.

PRO TIPS

» Images of frozen puddles or frost are all about the detail, so take your time with focus, depth of field and aperture. Because the surface of puddles is flat, the lens needs to be perpendicular rather than at an angle. A moderate aperture of around f/8 will ensure corners are sharp while using the lens' sweet spot for the best resolution.

» For macro frost images, a small aperture such as f/16 is required due to the shallow depth of field in such close-up scenarios.



above
A section of a frozen puddle containing a variety of colours, textures and flowing patterns. Canon EOS 5D MkII with Canon 100mm USM macro lens, ISO 100, 0.6sec at f/11, tripod

left
Detail of frost on barbed wire, taken at around 1:1 magnification. Canon EOS 5D MkII with Canon 100mm USM macro lens, ISO 100, 0.5sec at f/16, tripod

URBAN WINTER SCENES



For those living in urban areas, it's not always possible to get out into the countryside due to time constraints, or possibly even because of road closures after heavy snow. It's worth having a walk around your town or village with an open mind and seeing what presents itself. Anyone in a position to access a 'chocolate box' village during snow is likely to be on to a winner, especially during the twilight hours before sunrise or after sunset. The blue cast evident in skies at this time works perfectly with the warm light created by illuminated street lamps and houses.

If snow is falling, try using a reasonably fast shutter speed of at least 1/100sec to capture flakes rather than streaks. This can have a pleasing effect in urban scenes where the background is dark enough to make the snowflakes visible. These images seem to work especially well when people are included in the scene, enabling you to produce Dickensian

village scenes or Lowry-style cityscapes. A focal length of 50mm or longer works best to compress the perspective and makes the snow more visible. When processing the Raw file, adjust the clarity slider to bring out more details in the snow.

Urban winter scenes can offer potential even in the absence of snow and frost. Sometimes we don't get the snow and frost we desire; some winters can be mild, dark and wet. Or perhaps you live in one of the parts of the UK that rarely gets snow. In such situations, people going about their business with brightly coloured clothes or umbrellas make good subjects, as they can appear to glow through the gloom. Alternatively, reflections of people and subjects such as streetlights can look effective on damp roads, especially after dark or at twilight. A lens with an aperture of at least f/2.8 combined with a high ISO can be fast enough for you to handhold your camera. If things don't work out at street level, seek an elevated viewpoint and use a telephoto lens to take in the town or village as a whole.

left
Ripponden,
West Yorkshire.
Falling snow in a
village can make
for a pleasant
scene, especially
if there are a few
well-positioned
people in the shot.
Canon EOS 5D
MkIII with 50mm
f/1.4 lens, ISO 400,
1/100sec at f/9,
handheld

below
Haworth,
Yorkshire.
Canon EOS 5D
MkIII with 50mm
lens, ISO 400,
1.3sec at f/9, tripod

PRO TIPS

» Any editing software can be used to convert images to black & white, but for absolute control over how the tones and details are rendered, Nik Software's Silver Efex Pro takes some beating. This software is available as part of the Google Nik Collection and it's worth downloading the free trial to give it a try.

» Rain and snow covers are available for most cameras and can be useful accessories in winter. Personally, though, if the rain gets very heavy I hang the camera round my neck and zip my waterproof jacket over the top of it until the shower passes. The camera can then be back in action in seconds. Avoid this if the camera is very cold, as condensation can form due to your body heat.





TREES AND WOODLAND

Trees make excellent subjects throughout the year, but in misty or frosty weather, woodland images exude atmosphere. In deciduous woodland in winter the leaf canopy is absent, adding to the mystery and mood of the resulting images. Misty woodland scenes are very photogenic, as the trunks appear to gradually fade into the scene. As a result, the complex nature of woodland is somewhat simplified by mist, making scenes less cluttered and more pleasing to the eye. Coniferous forests can look incredibly photogenic in fog, as the straight, orderly trunks are tightly packed and arranged in a less chaotic manner than in deciduous woodland. Another approach to shooting evergreens is to view them from the side, or from above if access to an elevated viewpoint is possible. The tree canopy can look particularly impressive with a dusting of snow.

Outside of woodland, it's worth doing a recce to seek out groups of trees that are either clustered together or form some kind of order or symmetry. This could be a copse at the edge of a field or planted trees that are equidistant and form a line – these are usually found along pavements in urban areas, in parks or on golf courses and can be photographed either 'disappearing' into a scene or photographed side-on. By experimenting with depth of field, all kinds of artistic approaches are possible.

A tried and tested subject is the lone tree. Possibly a cliché, but a bare tree in snow rarely fails to produce an effective composition due to the simplicity of the scene. Using a telephoto lens can give good results. Small, lone trees can be found around the margins of lakes and reservoirs, and on calm days this type of landscape can look very tranquil when captured with a wideangle lens.



PRO TIPS

- » In mist-filled woodland, try to seek out strong compositions. Look for repeating patterns or symmetry.
- » Frosty branches on bare trees are wonderfully photogenic in almost all scenarios.

above
Although this looks like an early morning shot, it was actually taken at around 12.30pm – it takes the mid-winter sun a long time to rise above the hill behind these trees.
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 100mm USM macro lens, ISO 100, 1/15sec at f/13, tripod

left
Baitings Reservoir, West Yorkshire. Winter images don't necessarily need to be predominantly white, as long as the contrast is there.
Canon EOS 5D MkII with 21mm Zeiss lens, ISO 100, 1/60sec at f/5.6, tripod



MINIMALIST WINTER LANDSCAPES

In overcast weather with snow, or even in fog, there's no better time to get creative and try a minimalist approach. Such conditions have the effect of simplifying the appearance of the landscape, forcing the photographer to concentrate on careful composition; a few strong elements can make for a striking photograph. Your subject matter could be people, blades of grass poking through snow, telegraph posts, trees or even hardy animals such as sheep – anything that breaks the monotony of uniform white and gives a sense of scale.

It's often easier to spot such compositions in stark winter landscapes because much of the clutter and colours that normally surround us are taken out of the equation. Keep an eye out for any splashes of colour, natural patterns or symmetrical features that appear from an uncomplicated background. The desired effect for minimalistic images is usually a high-contrast, stark and graphic scene, so look for subjects that give good separation against the white, and expose accordingly. The size and placement of the chosen subject in the frame is critical, as the bulk of the image is



above

Golf courses are often worth a look, especially with a covering of snow and some bare trees around.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with 70-200mm lens at 70mm, ISO 100, 1/200sec at f/6.3, 0.6 ND soft grad, handheld

below, left

A day of snow and freezing fog provides the perfect minimalist background... all that remains is to find a subject or willing models! *Canon EOS 5D MkII with 16-35mm lens at 16mm, ISO 200, 1/13sec at f/10, handheld*

opposite

In the bleak and largely featureless moorland of the South Pennines, subjects to compose an image around are thin on the ground. Here, blades of grass protruding through the snow, and a puddle, were all that was on offer. *Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 21mm Zeiss lens, ISO 100, 1/4sec at f/16, tripod*



largely negative space. By all means try the traditional rule of thirds, but for more abstract images such as these, textbook rules don't always work best. Placing your main subject in the middle of the scene can be effective, and you can use the zoom to make it larger or smaller in the frame.

For minimalist images, dialling in a stop or so of exposure compensation (using evaluative metering) is even more important; it is essential to ensure highlights are retained so there's still texture in the snow. As long as the exposure is bright and as accurate as you can get it, minor tweaks can be made in post-processing.

When out shooting minimalistic images, pay attention to what could work in black & white. Winter scenes are often almost monochrome in nature, and the tones in the sky can provide contrast. In overcast weather the grey sky may be

darker than the snow, so compose accordingly to make use of the resulting layers of white and grey. Consider placing the horizon centrally in your composition, and think about including more sky or more snow.

PRO TIPS

» Many minimalist images benefit from a boost to overall contrast in post-processing, either by making a slight 'S' shape in the Curves tool, or by adding another layer and choosing overlay, with opacity reduced to suit your taste.

» When processing the image, experiment with highlights; some shots benefit from more detail in the bright tones while other images suffer. As long as all highlight detail is retained in the Raw file, your options are open.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

- 1 Get kitted out for the cold. From thermal hats and gloves to waterproof boots, it's important to be comfortable and safe when out in the hills.
- 2 Keep an eye on the weather – the short-term forecast is often very accurate these days, and it will help you plan your location to suit the conditions.
- 3 When out shooting in snow, consider which style of image suits the weather – for example, a minimalist approach may be best if it's overcast, while bigger views can work better in sunlight.
- 4 As these are the darkest months of the year, use a tripod and cable release. The tripod comes in handy as a probe to test uncertain ground such as moorland, where ditches and puddles may be covered by snow.
- 5 In freezing weather with a lack of big vistas, grab a macro lens or a lens with the ability to shoot close-ups, and explore the patterns nature has created overnight. The spray from small waterfalls can produce some interesting ice sculptures.
- 6 Have spare batteries with you, as shooting in cold weather drains them a little faster. At 0°C the effect is mild, at around 10% less efficiency, but if you're heading to colder climes the effect will become more pronounced.
- 7 Make use of any hills that block out sunlight. The weaker sunlight in mid-winter may only rise above hills by late morning, if at all, giving extended photography time. When it does appear, it can be like having a second sunrise.
- 8 Don't worry if there's no snow or frost. Bright colours or city lights on dark, damp winter days can be very photogenic.
- 9 If you pop indoors for a break, into a café, for example, use a lens cap and put the camera in a bag, if possible, until you go back out again. This can avoid the optics from fogging up, which can take quite a while to clear.
- 10 Use a lens hood to keep falling snow or rain off the lens element, but have a couple of lens cloths handy just in case.

TAKE PART! Enter our 'winter landscapes' competition – turn to page 111 for details

QUICK GUIDE TO...

Lightroom workflow

Post-processing images can seem like a dark art at times, but **Doug Chinnery** explains how his Lightroom workflow efficiently helps him create powerful photographs that reflect his creative aims



A Raw file is just that, raw. Raw data, just a series of ones and zeros; flat, lifeless and in need of processing. However, there is a danger of thinking of our photographs simply as images that need to be 'processed'. Photographs are not meat. They should hold something of the emotion we felt while in the landscape, the passion we feel for the outdoors. That feeling needs to be revealed. As we sit down in front of our computer, that should be our aim.



THE HEART OF AN EFFECTIVE WORKFLOW

When making images in the field it pays to be methodical, and the same applies when working in Lightroom. Having a core workflow helps us quickly get the basics right, extracting the life from flat Raw files.

Try this approach:

» Right click your Raw file and select Create Virtual Copy; then work on the copy so you can refer back to the original to see how your changes are improving the image.

» In the Lens Corrections panel, select Enable Profile Corrections and Remove Chromatic Aberration.

» Set the white balance but don't feel constrained by a 'correct' setting. View white balance as a creative tool, for warming autumn foliage images or cooling winter snow scenes, for example. You are the artist; you decide how your image should look, not the grey card.

» Now we turn to the most powerful sliders in Lightroom, in the Basic panel. Set the black and white point by holding the cmd (Mac) or ctrl (Windows) key down as you slide the Whites slider slowly right until it reveals blown pixels, slide slightly back towards the centre to hide these. Repeat with the Blacks slider, but moving to the left. On most images this makes a huge improvement. If it doesn't do that immediately, adjust the sliders more so the image does look good to your eye.



» Then set the Highlights & Shadows slider by eye.

» Once done, you should rarely need to touch the Vibrance or Saturation sliders, and if you do feel the need, remember that you don't have to go all the way to 100...

» Beware of the Clarity slider; it introduces mid-tone contrast, giving an appearance of sharpness, but can be quite destructive if not used with care.



CREATING IMAGES THAT 'SING'

Basic tweaks made, it's time to unleash some of Lightroom's other tools, in moderation, to help us realise our creative vision. Beware of using everything on every image. A little visual 'seasoning' goes a long way.

1

Select the Crop tool and press the F key. Now your focus is on the image alone. Crop and click and drag the image around within the crop until it is perfect.

2

Use the Radial Filter tool to direct light to an area we want our audience's eyes to rest. Draw an oval with the feather slider at 100, place it in position, tick Invert Mask and gently increase the exposure slider to see soft light appear.

3

Adobe designed the De-Haze slider to remove haze. However, in some images, such as woodland scenes, when used with great care and restraint and moved to the left, it can enhance any mist.



4

Try using the split tone controls to add warmth or coolness to your shadows or highlights, or both. This can be an effective technique in both colour and black & white photographs, and can be used to create effects such as sepia and cyanotype to your images.

5

Vignettes have a bad name among some photographers but, used with discretion and well feathered, they can focus the viewer on the core of the image, giving a sense of intimacy or drama.





Open cast mine, Cottbus-North, Brandenburg, Germany.

The Metabolic Landscape

This book project collaboration between Gina Glover, Geof Rayner and Jessica Rayner – a family team – offers a compelling and thought-provoking insight into how we perceive and interact with the landscape at a fundamental energy level

The Metabolic Landscape begins by looking at the landscape and at objects and processes in the landscape. What we call the metabolic landscape is a place of chemical and energy flows. While to describe the landscape in terms of metabolism may be recent, metabolism is an essential mechanism of evolution. What differs from the past is that the Earth's metabolism is significantly affected by the Energy Transition, the 200-year-old shift from a society based upon low energy use to one of high – indeed, ever-increasing – energy use. The former phase was associated with renewable energy sources such as wind, water and muscle; the latter phase is overwhelmingly associated with fossil energy, with a resulting feedback.

Many have since argued, with energy legislation being the result, that a new Energy Transition is needed, one entailing a shift to less pollutant sources of energy or reduced energy use.

Perception and practice relate, respectively, to how we interpret the metabolic landscape and the objects and processes found within it and how, through art practice, we might alter our taken-for-granted perceptions and find more critical and creative ways of approaching it. In Gina Glover's case it occurs through the photography of landscape and an attempt to visually frame the landscape's energetic components and relations.

The proposition is that metabolism should be an essential feature of our understanding of the landscape. Too often the landscape is perceived in compartmentalised terms: it is a place for aesthetic experience or enjoyment outside of urban living; it is a playground, for walks, for cycling, for hunting. It is where food is grown, obviously. And it provides space in abundance. But it is also the place from which urban life is supplied with resources and from which energy is extracted. The landscape



Titan crane, Hotellneset coal harbour, Longyearben, Spitsbergen, Norway.



Fugitive gas, McKenzie County, North Dakota, USA.

PHOTO SHOWCASE



Bidston windmill, Birkenhead, Wirral Peninsula.



Maentwrog hydroelectric power station, Trawsfynedd reservoir, Gwynedd.



Coastal protection study, Whitley Bay, Sandbanks, Dorset.

is metabolic. Humans are now, it is argued, the world's greatest evolutionary force. It is claimed that intensified land use results in biodiversity loss, the removal of forest cover, water insecurity and soil degradation. It is claimed that the Energy Transition, in releasing atmospheric carbon from the use of fossil fuels, has unbalanced the global carbon cycle and has disrupted the planet's climate. Such concerns about the growing mismatch between economic growth and planetary health are not new. More than 150 years ago John Stuart Mill, the leading Victorian economist, expressed the concern that the pace of economic growth was outrunning the resilience of nature. As Mill identified, the principal change to the landscape was agricultural. Around 12,000 years ago farming was small scale and primitive and in its essential respects it achieved precisely the same thing that modern farming does today, capturing solar energy in plant life. Beginning around 200 years ago, human technological development lunged forward. In the blink of an evolutionary eye the world changed from a long-established pattern of low

energy use to high energy use. Agricultural production, increasingly efficient due to machines (first driven by steam, then petroleum), helped to free population from the growth shackles of limited food availability. It's been argued that the combination of greater agricultural production and faster technological development set off a 'technophysio evolution' marked by population growth, reduced death rates and improving human physiology.

The question posed is, at the beginning of the 21st century, whether the new metabolic landscape of energy and chemistry has overreached itself. What we often think of or describe as a natural landscape is one increasingly moulded by human presence. The case presented in the book is that we need to learn more about energy in the landscape. In visualising energy in the landscape, we learn not just about the quality of the energy sources and our dependence upon them but also the fragility of that relationship and how patterns of energy use cast a long shadow into the future.

GET THE BOOK!

The Metabolic Landscape
(Black Dog Publishing, £19.95,
ISBN 9781908966278)
is available now from
themetaboliclandscape.com



THE ULTIMATE PRINT

Experiencing the thrill of producing your own fine art photography prints has never been more accessible. Eddie Ephraums explores the standout features on two new Canon PIXMA PRO A3+ printers that use the latest technology to help you easily create gallery-quality prints



As a workshop leader and mentor I work with a wide variety of photographers, each with their own vision and looking for the ultimate form of expression. So when it comes to printing, which is surely the most rewarding but also the most visible stage in the photographic process, I would always recommend the Canon PIXMA PRO range of printers.

The PIXMA PRO 1005 is perfect for those who are starting to explore printing at a deeper level, who want superb quality and fast printing speeds. The excellent Chromalife dye ink system, with eight separate inks, makes it simple to produce rich, vibrant colour prints, even for those with little experience. The three grey inks ensure smooth tones and help to create wonderfully neutral monochromes. You can also make great toned prints.

For those who want something more, there is the PIXMA PRO 105. It employs 10 Lucia pigment inks, with separate blacks for matt and gloss paper, for the very best results whatever paper surface you choose. Printing to exhibition standard is no problem for either printer, with the pigment inks giving even

longer lasting results, and the 10-ink Lucia system offering yet more finesse. The PIXMA PRO range extends further too, to the PIXMA PRO 1 that my professional colleagues and I especially love for its 12 pigment ink system, with five black inks.

Keeping abreast of the latest technology, Canon's PIXMA PRO 1005 and 105 have in-built Wi-Fi connectivity that works with your own Wi-Fi networks as well as with Apple AirPrint, Google Cloud Print, PIXMA Cloud Link, the Canon PRINT Inkjet/SELPHY app and photography services such as Zenfolio and SmugMug. So you can easily print directly from cloud storage as well as from Wi-Fi enabled computers, tablets and smartphones from virtually anywhere.

Their incredibly solid construction gives whisper quiet, vibration-free – and therefore amazingly sharp – A3+ print production, and the printers are capable of output in less than three minutes. The superb economy and reliability of the PIXMA PRO printers are also key features to consider. The printers work beautifully with Canon's own photo and fine art papers and other well-known



brand papers, with easily downloaded ICC paper profiles from Canon's printer support website.

Printing with the PIXMA PRO 100s and 100s couldn't be easier or more intuitive, thanks in part to the excellent Canon Print Studio Pro plug-in. The unique Pattern Print function takes the guesswork out of printing. Select the best looking print from nine or more variations on a single printed sheet, read off the contrast/brightness and image colour settings, and you're ready to make perfect, finely adjusted, exhibition-standard prints – time and time again. No wonder over half the photographers on my last print workshop already owned PIXMA PRO printers.

So whether you're looking to progress your printing skills or want to explore the finer nuances of the photographic printing art, and want the right printer for the job, the 100s or 100s will more than meet every need. They certainly meet mine, whether creating prints for myself or clients, or printing on workshops. The Canon PIXMA PRO range offers it all.

PIXMA PRO 100s and 100s special features

- » No need to change, and therefore waste, black inks between matt and gloss papers.
- » The PIXMA PRO Optical Image Generation processor calculates the best combination of ink droplets to achieve the most accurate colours, while maintaining print speeds.
- » The standby power mode helps keep nozzles clear, minimising cleaning, and consumes a minuscule amount of power.
- » The Print Studio Pro plug-in gives a full print preview, even in black & white mode, and provides a really useful final checklist, helping to eliminate potentially costly mistakes.

Visual harmony

Paying careful attention to composition, Colin Bell highlights the anthropomorphic qualities of his subject to create an image that is more than simply a literal representation

As landscape photographers we photograph 'things'. There's no escaping that. In its simplest form there's an object or scene, some light, a lens and a sensor, be it digital or film. Alright, so there are a few exceptions: a lens could just be a hole through which the light travels and of course there are the fabulously interesting 'luminograms' by Michael G Jackson, which are simply the reaction of light and photographic paper, but I digress. In short, we go out with our cameras, find something to photograph, wait for the 'right' light, whatever that means for you, and make an image.

To generalise (always risky in a short article such as this), and without getting into any philosophical arguments about what is real, we depict the scenes that we have sought out and

use traditional compositional tools to achieve our aims. What if we want to show more than the literal scene? Can we use metaphor to give us a different outlook for compositions that go beyond the usual guidelines? I'm not talking here about abstraction processes such as multi-exposure or intentional camera movement but simply giving the viewer a different 'hook' from which to read the image.

The photograph shown was taken at Hodge Close quarry in the heart of the Lake District. It is a place characterised by steep slate and vertiginous rock faces, falling perilously down to the base of the quarries. Now you might think that suffering from both forms of vertigo, a fear of heights and with poor inner ear balance, the top of a quarry is not the best place for me to conduct a photography project. And you would

be right – just don't mention it to my life insurance company! The edges of these drops are guarded by some unbelievably hardy trees, which seem to prosper on the stoniest of ground. Hodge Close quarry is a popular place, not just among photographers, abseilers, climbers and divers, but also for other folk, many of whom think nothing of going right to the edge and taking the ultimate in literal photography by making selfies overlooking the drop.

Such frivolity is not for me, obviously, yet I felt that I could portray that same feeling of danger and recklessness by choosing an angle and composition that is totally based on portraying these trees as a foolhardy gathering, with one of them peering into the deep. The photograph is more than just the literal and uses the 'peering' metaphor as its sole compositional tool.





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The need to expose

Eager to escape his computer and get out early with his camera, David Noton heads to an elevated viewpoint in the Dorset Downs, where he revels in the joy of capturing an ethereal, mist-filled landscape

The forecast looks promising; a high is moving in. With the land still damp from the recent rainfall and the cloudless sky spelling a big temperature drop overnight, the settled, windless morning that is predicted should feature mist; that meteorological phenomenon so beloved by photographers. I've been stuck in front of a computer for almost a week, feeling like a slave to technology; the need to expose is building inexorably. A dawn session is a no-brainer, but where to go? I reel off the local options in my mind; I've done them all, many times, but every dawn is different, and I just need to be behind the lens, to feel like a photographer again. So, Bulbarrow; decision made, that's the hardest bit. But first I must prepare; boots by the door, outdoor clothing laid out, camera bag at the ready.

It's still configured in landscape mode: Canon EOS 5DS R, 14mm prime, 17mm and 24mm TS-E lenses and the inevitable 24-70mm. I'll not need the 100mm macro, but which telezoom to take? I decide to risk the 70-100mm gap and go for the new 100-400mm – for what I have in mind the longer reach could prove essential. Formatted memory cards, spare batteries, head torch. It's all standard stuff but needs checking every time; failing to prepare is, after all, preparing to fail. That done, it's time, after a puritanically restrained evening, for an early night.

I wake up minutes before the alarm and stumble about in the darkness, trying not to disturb Wendy. I curse as I trip over the dog. Hang on a minute, we don't have a dog... A quick coffee and I'm out the door. Above, I can see stars; game on. As I drive the deserted lanes of Dorset – through Purse Caundle, Sturminster Newton and Okeford Fitzpaine – I glimpse traces of mist lying in the fields along the way; this is looking good. The familiar excitement starts to build; it's reassuring it still does. Out of the car and up the hill; almost running, bag on back, tripod on shoulder, lungs heaving. My feet are already soaking – in long, damp grass, why are all walking boots about as waterproof as a wet sponge? And why, despite allowing myself plenty of time, am I always rushing? Because the view opening up below in the half-light is breathtaking, and I'm worried I may be missing something.

I get to my chosen spot and set up. Knowing exactly where to plonk my tripod is crucial; this is no time for faffing or prevarication. Legs level? I have more spirit levels than I can count on the Gitzo Systematic 3542 and Manfrotto geared head, plus the one in-camera, but still I fit one in the hotshoe; it just makes for quicker working, and when the Decisive Moment is nigh, speed is of the essence. Think landscape photography is a slow, measured, contemplative calling? Not in my experience. Hours of waiting followed by a few minutes of frantic activity, more like. But this morning it looks like there'll be no waiting for the light because, despite sunrise still being 30 minutes away, the ethereal scene I'm looking down on, lit by the cool twilight of the blue hour, is just so evocative. Now is the time.

I run through my checks like a pilot going through a pre-flight routine, quickly but methodically and logically. I compose, first by looking through the eyepiece, then with live view. Both means have their merits. Personally, I couldn't live without an optical viewfinder; I like to peer through the lens with my naked eye, really looking into the shot. Yes, I know all about the advantages of mirrorless cameras – smaller, lighter, and so on – but all the electronic viewfinders I've seen just look like poor quality TV screens; I don't want that interface coming between me and the scene. I suppose EVFs are getting better all the time, and maybe I'm being a stick in the mud, but so be it; I'll take the optical purity of a DSLR any day. But of course live view is so handy – as a way of double checking my composition and focusing accuracy it's indispensable.

Now I'm zooming in to the maximum level of magnification in live view. With everything in the frame over a kilometre away I've no concerns over depth of field, I focus on a prominent tree, set aperture to the f/11 sweet spot and move on to determining exposure. The histogram with an extra stop of exposure compensation in aperture priority mode reveals a camel's back bunched pleasingly to the right. As usual, white balance is set to daylight; I don't want the camera 'correcting' the rich, cool colour temperature of the light. Sure, I'm shooting Raw, so in-camera white balance settings are arbitrary, but I virtually always shoot in daylight mode and

rarely alter colour balance in Lightroom; I just go with what Mother Nature gives. I suppose all those years of exposing daylight-balanced reversal film have engendered that approach. Of course there's no right or wrong here, but that's my style and I'm sticking to it.

One last check. Is everything tight and stable? With a focal length of 170mm, any vibration will rob the image of ultimate quality, and with the 50.6-megapixel resolution of the 5DS R on the job, there's no hiding from shoddy technique. I select the activation. Just one press of the remote release activates the mirror lock-up with shutter firing after a one-second delay. I've now





made my first exposure; it looks fab, I'm buzzing. Setup and preflight checks took a lot less time than it will take you to read this; now I need to concentrate on the aesthetics. I stand back and re-evaluate. How can I make this shot better?

When faced with such enticing conditions it's sometimes almost overwhelming; the pressure to make the most of it photographically can take away from the enjoyment of the experience. The temptation to shoot every which way to cover all options is strong, but it never works; memory cards full of mediocrity ensue. Concentrating on making one picture as good as I possibly can is the only approach that works; only when I know

I've done that will I move on to exploring other possibilities. Ultimately, I'm only looking for one picture from this shoot; no one, myself included, will be interested in the also-rans.

An hour later I'm walking back to the car, replaying the shoot in my mind. It all went too quickly. I wish I'd had more time to savour the moment, the tranquility and the freedom. I have shot misty mornings here in Wessex more times than I've had hot dinners, and yet every time it's an uplifting joy. Would I have been here to witness this spectacle without the prompt of photography? It's doubtful. This morning has been special. I feel like a photographer again.

The Blackmore Vale at dawn, Dorset.
Canon EOS 5DS R with 100-400mm L IS II lens at 170mm, ISO 100, 3.2sec at f/11, remote release, tripod



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Lochan na Stainge, Highland, by Paul Holloway

ACCESS RATING

These are based around an 'averagely fit' person. Below are loose guidelines to what the ratings mean (N.B. they are assigned by the author and not verified by OP. Walk distances are one-way only):



1/5 Easy access – you can pretty much get straight out of your car and quickly be at the viewpoint via good quality paths.



2/5 Some gentle walking – generally less than a half mile – is involved, which may be on mixed quality paths.



3/5 A walk of up to about two miles, over quite easy terrain.



4/5 Medium length hike – up to about four miles over mixed terrain, possibly with some quite steep gradients.



5/5 The most difficult access. Long hike over challenging terrain (e.g. mountains/summits/steep coastal terrain); or involves travelling over particularly extreme ground (e.g. scrambling on rocks/exposed coastal paths or mountain ridges) over any distance.

LOCATIONS GUIDE

46 Viewpoints of the month

- 1 Cnoc na Gaoithe Highland
- 2 The Cairnwell Perth and Kinross

50 Viewpoints

- 3 Southend seafront Essex
- 4 British Camp hill and reservoir Worcestershire
- 5 Dinger Tor Devon
- 6 Lochan na Stainge Highland
- 7 The Quiraing Isle of Skye
- 8 Bracelet Bay Swansea
- 9 Honister Pass Cumbria
- 10 River Greet Nottinghamshire



Map plottings are approximate

Cnoc na Gaoithe, Highland

With the aim of capturing a beautiful winter sunset in Assynt Aidan Maccormick gambles on a last-minute viewpoint and is rewarded with some spectacular light and weather conditions

Iceland has Kirkjufell, Tibet has Mount Kailash and Scotland has Suilven. Well, that's the way I see it. Suilven dominates the magical area of Assynt in the north-west Highlands. Its striking form varies markedly depending on the angle that you approach it from, but it never fails to grab your attention. Unlike most mountains, Suilven is also very photogenic when you're standing right on top of it, due to the three distinct summits along its axis.

I spent a couple of fruitless days just before Christmas trying to photograph Assynt; most of my time was spent hiding in my car as strong westerly winds flung shower after shower of cold rain against the windshield. Less than a week later, however, fortified by Christmas leftovers and a much-improved weather forecast, I was excited to be heading back. Luckily the mild westerlies that had melted almost all the snow from the highest peaks switched to snow showers driven in from the north. Nights were frosty and the moon was full. I had three days to capture Assynt in its winter best.

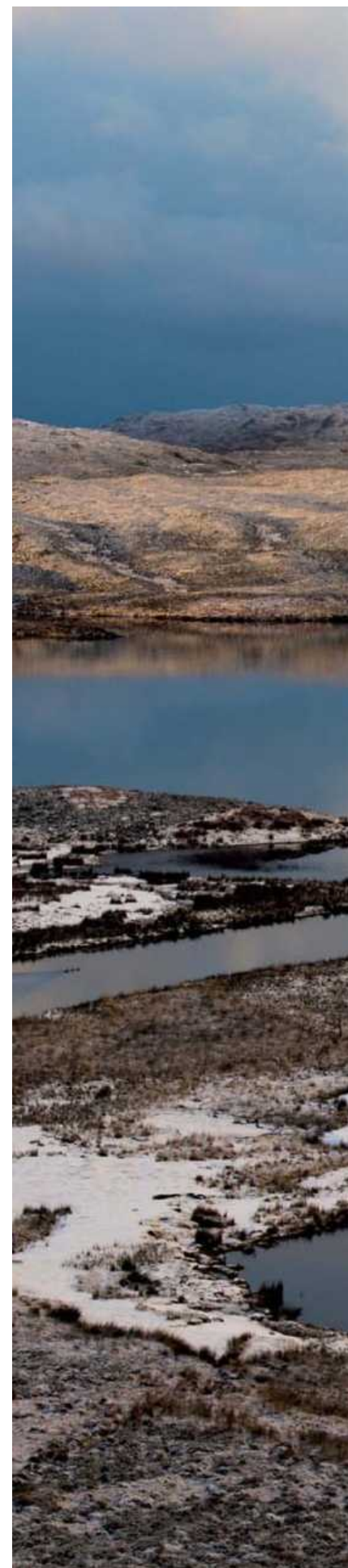
My plan was to camp on the summit of Stac Pollaidh, Suilven's baby brother to the south, photograph the sunset and then spend a couple of days camped on and around Suilven. I hoped for nice snowy images by day and astrophotography at night. Having packed my rucksack full of winter thermals and a ridiculous amount of my mother in law's homemade oatcakes, I jumped in the car and headed to Assynt.

Approaching Suilven from the east gives the most mouth-watering first glimpse of its peaks as you twist and turn along the single-track road. Heavy snow showers all morning meant the landscape looked

fantastic. Frost-covered trees, blue skies, virgin snow and perfect reflections had me running around excitedly with my camera before I was anywhere near Assynt proper. By the time I met the main road junction I realised with horror that I had dawdled far too long. The sun was already quite low and huge clouds were enveloping the northern sky. There was no way I would get to Stac Pollaidh for sunset.

I gambled on a last-minute viewpoint from a knoll by the side of the road and hurriedly packed my bag – the light was fading fast. Breathless and sweaty by the time I reached the hilltop, I was thrilled with the scene in front of me. Suilven was beautifully dusted with fresh snow, and the waters of Cam Loch were still enough for some very nice reflections. The sense of the sublime was further enhanced by the presence of thundersnow.

I quickly set up my tripod and used my 24-85 mm lens to take some test shots and play with composition. The scene was dramatically lit, but I didn't want to use filters to control the highlights. Snow showers came and went, hiding then exposing Suilven in the distance. Only when the sun became partially obscured did the colours really burst into life. I used a setting of f/8 and focused on the forested island to give me the depth of field I felt the scene needed. Using the camera's histogram I overexposed by a stop and a third, which was as far as I could go before losing detail in the snow. I used the lens at 52mm, knowing that I would heavily crop later on; shooting this wide allowed for any errors in my hastily arranged composition. Despite getting some shots of Suilven with aurora two nights later, it was this image from a last-minute dash that gives me most joy from the trip.



15 miles from Ullapool | 72 miles from Inverness | ACCESS RATING

PLANNING YOUR TRIP



How to get there From Ullapool, take the A835 north to Elphin (about 15 miles). Pass through the village and cross the main bridge over the Ledmore river. A couple of hundred metres after the bridge there is a small car park to the west of the road. From here, walk back south along the west side of the road for around 200m and cross into the rough grazing fields at the gate. There isn't a track to the top of the hill, so pick your way carefully though the heather for 300m, avoiding the boggiest bits.

What to shoot Mountain views and reflections.

Best time of day Any time of day.

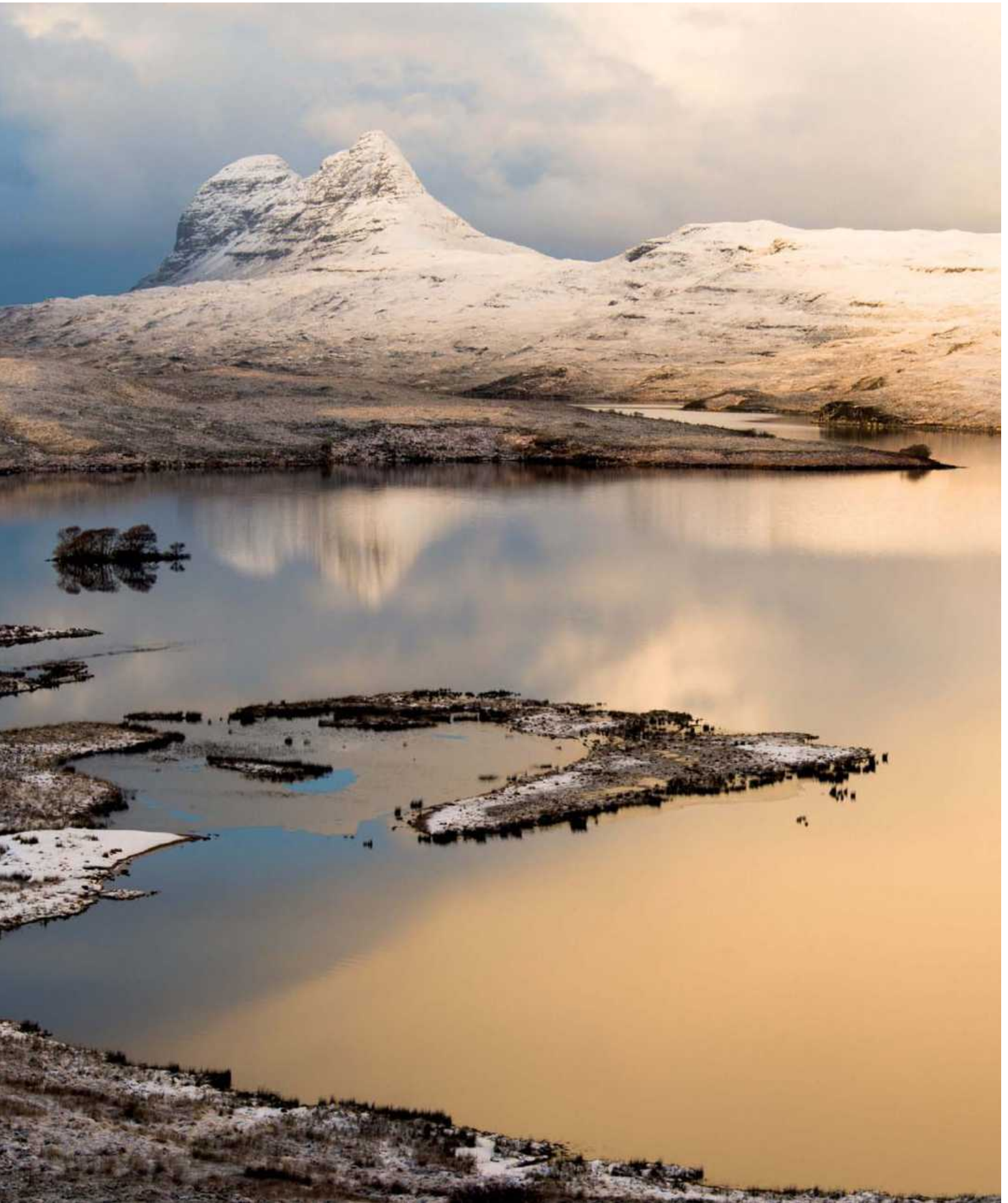
Nearest food/drink The Ceilidh Place, 14 West Argyle Street, Ullapool, IV26 2TY, 01854 612103, mountaincafe-aviemore.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Suilven B&B, Rhu, near Ullapool, IV26 2TJ, 01854 612955, bvegb.co.uk.

Other times of year Late autumn for colourful vegetation.

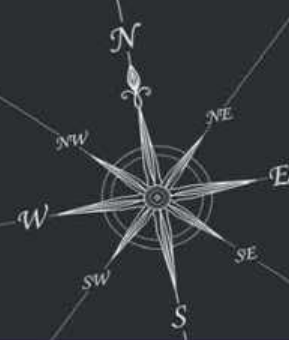
Ordnance Survey map LR 15

Nearby locations Knockan Crag (3 miles); Stac Pollaidh (11 miles).





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22nd - 29th Feb Lofoten Islands, Norway SOLD OUT	5th - 10th Sep Isle of Skye, Scotland
11th - 16th May Venice, Italy	11th - 17th Sep Isle of Lewis & Harris, Scotland
16th - 22nd May Tuscany, Italy 3 SPACES LEFT	26th - 3 Oct Santorini, Greece NEW
22nd - 27th May Cinque Terre, Italy 3 SPACES LEFT	13th - 20th Oct Slovenia & Croatia NEW
20th - 25th June Alsace, France NEW	22nd - 29th Oct Dolomites, Italy
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The Cairnwell, Perth and Kinross

*Battling wintry weather and gale force winds, **Carlton Doudney** seeks out a sheltered spot on the summit of the Cairnwell and succeeds in capturing a dramatic mountain vista*

As you drive up Glen Beag, the A93 reveals its Jekyll and Hyde nature; the twisty, narrow old road suddenly transforms into a modern, wide, straight road. Sweeping up along the Devil's Elbow corner (a double hairpin bend), your windscreen is soon dominated by the Cairnwell, a majestic mountain south of Braemar.

The weather forecast also had a dual tale to tell when I visited the area early last December. There were just a few clouds in the sky over the snowy mountains, but these favourable conditions were accompanied by gale force winds. I'd had the Cairnwell in mind for a while, however, and I was keen to photograph the view from the summit on a clear winter's day.

Following the line of one of the ski tows up to the broad ridge between the Cairnwell and Càrn Aosda, it is a short walk to the summit. The wind was howling as I made my way along the ridge, becoming even worse as I made my ascent, but I had a plan. The summit is marred by radio masts, which have a number of support buildings, including an open-ended old wooden hut. Half buried under rocks for protection, it was ideal for stowing my gear, and also provided shelter, enabling me to perform tasks such as changing lenses and putting on extra layers of clothing.

Making use of the support buildings, I could set up my tripod in relative shelter, getting as close to the corners as



I could before lining up my composition. I ventured out into the wind, sitting on the snow and balancing the camera on my knees, waiting for lulls in the wind. But even with a down jacket the cold cut through to the bone and I had to return to the shelter.

At the end of what I believed was a successful shoot, I descended the mountain, plunging down into the deep

snow of the east-facing slope; to begin with the wind was so strong it was actually forcing me away from my destination. By the time I reached the car park it was dark. It was also still very windy, but much less so than on the summit. I took a moment to think back on my little adventure, with fond memories of the small, weathered hut, grateful for the shelter it gave me.

*Sony Alpha A7R
with Sony Zeiss
55mm lens,
ISO 100, 0.6sec
at f/14, remote
release, tripod*

25 miles from Blairgowrie | 40 miles from Perth | **ACCESS RATING**

PLANNING YOUR TRIP



How to get there Taking the A93 north from Perth, head through Blairgowrie and on towards Braemar. Staying on the A93, pass through Bridge of Cally and through Spittal of Glenshee until you reach the Glenshee Ski Centre car park and the Cairnwell.

What to shoot Huge mountain vistas, plunging corries, mountain hares in their winter coats, deer.

Best time of day From this high spot, mornings and late afternoons are equally good for capturing light on the mountains facing both east and west.

Nearest food/drink Base Café, Glenshee Ski Centre, Cairnwell, Braemar, AB35 5XU, 01339 741320, ski-glenshee.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Callater Lodge Guest House, 9 Glenshee Road, Braemar, AB35 5YQ, 01339 741275, callaterlodge.co.uk.

Other times of year Autumn for snow-capped summits; spring for fresh foliage on the hills.

Ordnance Survey map LR 43

Nearby locations Creag Choinnich (9 miles); Linn of Dee (15 miles).

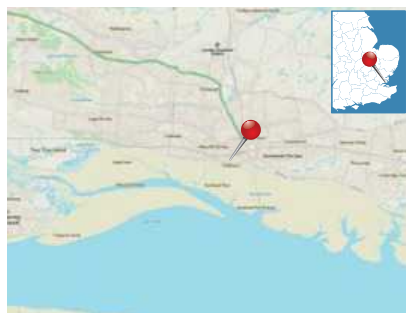
12 miles from Basildon | 20 miles from Chelmsford

ACCESS RATING 

Southend seafront, Essex

Southend-on-Sea is a busy seaside town on the Essex coast. The seafront itself faces south and offers many photographic opportunities, both natural and manmade. Potential subjects include a pier, timber groynes and steps leading down to the beach, all of which can be used effectively in the foreground or as main points of interest.

How to get there From the M25, take junction 29 on to the A127 to Southend-on-Sea (about 24 miles). Continue to the seafront and turn right; after you've



passed the main pier entrance you'll come to a pay and display parking area overlooking the seafront.

What to shoot Long exposures of tidal water movements around manmade features, panoramic vistas of the coastline with its numerous boats.

Best time of day Early mornings and late evenings, as the coastline faces south.

Nearest food/drink The Esplanade, Western Esplanade, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 1EE, 01702 346233, esplanadepub.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Gleneagles Guesthouse, 5 Clifftown Parade, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 1DP, 01708 333635, gleneaglesguesthouse.co.uk.

Other times of year Late summer is especially good for sunsets at low tide and reflections of boats in the receding pools.

Ordnance Survey map Explorer 175

Nearby locations Leigh-on-Sea (4 miles); Hadleigh Castle (8 miles).



© Rob Hatton

4.5 miles from Ledbury | 24 miles from Cheltenham

ACCESS RATING 

British Camp hill and reservoir, Worcestershire

British Camp hill (Herefordshire Beacon) and reservoir are found in the Malvern Hills, which divide the rolling fields of Herefordshire to the east and the flatter plains of Worcestershire's Severn Valley to the west. The area comprises 20 hills, with British Camp hill being the third highest at 338m.

How to get there The Malvern Hills are equidistant between Great Malvern and Ledbury on the A449. The pay and display car park (£3 for all day) provides access to the ancient earthworks of British Camp and reservoir viewpoint. Access to the hills is from the side of the car park via a wooden farm gate. The car park can get busy, so arrive early, if possible, or try the nearby Blackhill car park.



What to shoot Many inspiring views can be enjoyed here. The low winter sun casts shadows as it descends behind British Camp hill (an iron age hill fort), but it still catches the tops of the trees and warms the distant peaks and countryside. The hills are also known for their wildflowers and birds.

Best time of day During winter, early mornings and mid/late afternoons are best for dramatic shadows and sidelight. Snow adds untamed beauty to the hill peaks.

Nearest food/drink The Malvern Hills Hotel, Wynds Point, Malvern, WR13 6DW, malvernhillshotel.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation The Malvern Hills Hotel – as above.

Other times of year Autumn offers warm tones in the trees and bracken, and there can be mist in the valleys.

Ordnance Survey map Explorer 190

Nearby locations Wynds Point (0.5 miles); Little Malvern Priory (1.5 miles).



© Julia Martin



Dinger Tor, Devon

Dinger Tor lies to the north of Dartmoor National Park. It is found a little way into the moor and offers a feeling of remoteness but is relatively easy to access. The views south from the tor give you a sense of the scale of the moor, and it is close to Dartmoor's highest point, High Willhays. Please note that Dinger Tor is in a military range, so access is only possible when firing is not happening. To check the firing times, go to gov.uk/government/publications/dartmoor-firing-programme.

How to get there Leave the A30 at Okehampton and head to the centre of town. At the traffic lights on Fore Street, turn on to George Street. After a few hundred yards, turn right on to Station



Road, signposted 'Camp', and follow this road for a mile or so uphill. Eventually you will reach the end of the public highway at Okehampton camp, but you can continue on to the moor on a well made up military road to park near Rowtor. From here, walk south for two miles, taking the left fork when the path splits in two.

What to shoot There are dramatic views in most directions. Lints Tor, to the south-west, also offers a good focal point.

Best time of day Late afternoon for the

chance of good sidelight on the rocks.

Nearest food/drink 2 Rivers Restaurant, 16 Fore Street, Okehampton, EX20 1AN, 01837 52981, 2riversrestaurant.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Meadowlea Guest House, 65 Station Road, Okehampton, EX20 1EA, 01837 53200, meadowleaguesthouse.co.uk.

Other times of year All year round.

Ordnance Survey map LR 191

Nearby locations Yes Tor (1 mile); Meldon viaduct (7 miles).

© Bruce Little

4 miles from Okehampton | 28 miles from Exeter | ACCESS RATING

14 miles from Tyndrum | 75 miles from Glasgow | ACCESS RATING

Lochan na Stainge, Highland

Lochan na Stainge is a wonderful viewpoint over the rugged moorland of Rannoch Moor. There are excellent views across the lochan to the mountains of the Black Mount: Meall a'Bhùiridh and Stob Ghabhar.

How to get there From Glasgow, take the A82 north, passing through Tyndrum and Bridge of Orchy. About seven miles after Bridge of Orchy, park at the lay-by beside the bridge over the River Ba.

What to shoot Views westwards towards the Black Mount across the lochan.



Directly opposite, on the other side of the road, Loch Ba is also a great viewpoint; I've often photographed both on the same morning.

Best time of day Early morning for first light on the mountains.

Nearest food/drink The Kingshouse Hotel, Glencoe, PH49 4HY, 01855 851259, kingshousehotel.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation The Kingshouse Hotel – as above.

Other times of year The location is good at all times of year, but particularly in autumn when the moor grass becomes golden.

Ordnance Survey map LR 50

Nearby locations Lochan na h-Achlaise (1 mile); Loch Tulla (7 miles).

© Paul Holloway



The Quiraing, Isle of Skye

The Quiraing is one of the best known photography locations in the UK, and it's quite rare not to see a tripod set up somewhere in the area. Surprisingly, most people don't venture more than five minutes from the car park; if you are a little more adventurous you will be rewarded with some of the most dramatic landscapes you'll ever see.

How to get there From Staffin or Uig, drive north on the A855 for about a mile and then take the single track road signposted to the Quiraing. After a further



four miles you will find a large gravel area to the side of the road for parking.

What to shoot Views to both the north and the south along the ridge, and to the east if the sunrise puts on a good display.

Best time of day Dawn for the best light.

Nearest food/drink The Uig Hotel, 10 Clachan, Staffin, Isle of Skye, IV51 9HY,

01470 562434, uighotel.com.

Nearest accommodation The Uig Hotel – as above.

Other times of year The Quiraing is good for photography all year round.

Ordnance Survey map LR 23

Nearby locations The Fairy Glen (6 miles); the Storr (6 miles).



© Marcus McAdam

20 miles from Portree | 130 miles from Inverness | ACCESS RATING

6 miles from Swansea | 45 miles from Cardiff | ACCESS RATING

Bracelet Bay, Swansea

Just around the corner from Mumbles, Bracelet Bay is the first bay reached when heading west towards the Gower Peninsula. Facing south-east, the bay is well placed for sunrise. The Mumbles lighthouse, located at the easterly end, works well as a focal point. At low tide there are also plenty of rocks and pools to be found, giving plenty of possibilities for images.

How to get there From Swansea, follow the A4067 west towards Mumbles. Carry on through the town, past the pier and along Mumbles Road. As you reach the summit of a hill the road heads round to the right, revealing the bay. There is a car park above the beach.

What to shoot Seascapes, the lighthouse and the seabed when the tide is low.



Best time of day Sunrise for south-easterly views.

Nearest food/drink Castellamare, Bracelet Bay, Mumbles Road, Mumbles, SA3 4JT, 01792 369408, castellamare.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation The Mumbles Hotel, 654-656 Mumbles Road, Mumbles, SA3 4EA, 01792 360450, mumbles-hotel.co.uk.

Other times of year Winter presents good opportunities for evening shoots, as the sun sets closer to the western side of the bay.

Ordnance Survey map LR 159

Nearby locations Three Cliffs Bay (9 miles); Rhossili (17 miles).



© Graham Lawson

Honister Pass, Cumbria

Connecting the Buttermere valley with the eastern end of Borrowdale valley, Honister Pass rises steeply to over 350m. As one of the highest passes in Cumbria, this dramatic location offers fantastic views across the Lake District. In winter the top of the pass and the surrounding fells are often covered with snow.

How to get there From the M6 motorway, take the A66 trunk road from junction 40 towards Keswick (20 minutes). From Keswick, follow the B5289 along the side of Derwent Water and up on to Honister Pass. There are several lay-bys and parking points on the pass.

What to shoot Spectacular views. The



various stopping points on Honister Pass offer plenty of variety. There are hills and woods in Borrowdale, and Buttermere lake is close by. Ullswater and Castlerigg are just a few miles from Keswick.

Best time of day The fells are inspiring at any time of day, depending on cloud cover and weather. The golden hour, especially around sunset (the viewpoint shown faces west) will often provide interesting light.

Nearest food/drink Sky Hi Café,

Honister Slate Mine, Borrowdale, Keswick, CA12 5XN, 01768 777230, honister.com/sky-hi-cafe.

Nearest accommodation Yew Tree Farm Guest House, Rosthwaite, Keswick, CA12 5XB, 01768 777675, borrowdaleyewtreefarm.co.uk.

Other times of year Any time of year is good in the Lake District.

Ordnance Survey map OL 4

Nearby locations Buttermere (2 miles); Derwent Water (8 miles).



10 miles from Keswick | 50 miles from Carlisle | ACCESS RATING

8 miles from Newark-on-Trent | 15 miles from Nottingham | ACCESS RATING

River Greet, Nottinghamshire

Nestled in the rural landscape of Nottinghamshire this small river snakes through idyllic farmland near the small, historic town of Southwell. A path follows the route of the river for around two miles, with open farmland vistas on one side and views back to the spire of Southwell Minster on the other.

How to get there From Newark-on-Trent or Mansfield, follow the A617, turning south at the village of Hockerton and down towards Southwell. As you enter the town and pass the old mill you'll find a small car park, adjacent to the Final Whistle pub. The riverside path is a short walk back along the road and through the grounds of the old mill.

What to shoot The meandering river, isolated trees, historic buildings, abstract river reed and crop patterns.



Best time of day Dawn in the autumn and winter months; the sun rises parallel to the route of the river and, in the right conditions, light mist can be seen swirling above the water.

Nearest food/drink Saracens Head Hotel, Market Place, Southwell, NG25 0HE, 01636 812701, saracensheadhotel.com.

Nearest accommodation Saracens Head Hotel – as above.

Other times of year Sunset at any time of year; the fields glow in the warm light.

Ordnance Survey map Explorer 271

Nearby locations Rufford Country Park (10 miles); Clumber Park (19 miles).



© Dan Cook

NEXT MONTH

OP200 ON SALE 17 DECEMBER

How to shoot epic winter adventures

Hans Strand on intimate landscapes

Autumn landscapes competition – the results!

On test: Canon PowerShot G3 X

Drew Buckley – Brecon Beacons

Photography and the remembrance of things past

From the demolition of the Buddhas of Bamiyan to the systematic destruction of Palmyra, worldwide architecture of vast historical significance is being torn apart. Sometimes, Nick Smith says, photographs are all that is left

I don't know if this is a rare or good thing, but I hardly ever look at my old photographs. This is probably for the same reason that I almost never read books that I wrote years ago or listen to the records I made when I was in a rock band. The past is so inflexible and established, while the future contains only possibility. And yet, after another news report of further destruction of the Syrian desert city of Palmyra, in a moment of nostalgia I got out the photographs I took of that haunting metropolis and, over a glass of wine, inwardly wept for the aspect of humankind that rejoices in destroying its heritage.

Here in the West, while the powers that be tie themselves up into self-righteous knots of political correctness over how to react, this beautiful flower of the desert is being desecrated. I have toyed with the idea of calling it a crime against humanity, but that label is tragically best reserved for what is happening to the people of the Levant. But it is nonetheless a crime against civilisation and history. Despite the fact that the old Silk Road city has risen and fallen many times, its further destruction to repurpose hand-hewn masonry as war *matériel* is bad enough.

A few years ago I spent several days wandering among Palmyra's triumphal arches and colonnades, funerary temples and its glorious Tetrastyle. I also idled away time in the Temple of Baalshamin and the Temple of Bel, the baths of Diocletian and the Valley of the Tombs. I walked among them at sunrise, during the blistering midday sun and by moonlight. I knew then that this was a special moment in my life and yet had no inkling that each of these wondrous buildings would become a chess piece on the board of a squalid game. At the time I was just a pilgrim, no more than yet another guy with a camera, trying his hardest to get some decent images of a place I instinctively recognised the importance of, but of which I understood so little.

It turns out that the photographs I brought home from Syria were to be invested with more significance than I could ever have supposed. Today they form a part – thankfully a small part – of all that's left. I know that Palmyra was already a ruin many times over, and that history is littered with the carnage of the scorched earth policies of marauding invaders: but to have to admit that we live in an age where such wantonness still exists feels like something of an insult. The immediate generations

before mine fought wars to prevent atrocities like this ever happening again. They must be turning in their graves to think how little we learned from their sacrifice and with what shameful reluctance our politicians step in to do the right thing.

To my mind, the destruction of Palmyra ranks alongside the burning of the Library of Alexandria or the looting of the Baghdad Museum. In the case of the former, two millennia ago, the precious scrolls and books are lost for eternity and our loss cannot be measured; with the latter, in part due to documentary and catalogue photography, combined with the international effort of archaeologists and forensic scientists, many of the stolen artefacts have been returned to Iraq and the museum has been officially reopened. While there is currently no way of telling what the future holds for Palmyra, as with the Buddhas of Bamiyan that were dynamited by the Taliban, we can for now only be certain that one of the great cultural landmarks of human creativity has been obliterated.

I reluctantly confess that I was once cynical about the value of Wilfred Thesiger's photography. I used to think that the quality of his images of the Empty Quarter was not much better than that of the amateur enthusiast. With the passing of time I am happy to accept that his portfolios of the Arabian Sands and the Marsh Arabs have become crucial, if doleful, hymns to a past irrecoverably lost. While I once thought of his images uncharitably, I am now prepared to revise my opinion and say that were it not for the sheer enterprise and bloody-mindedness of this most extraordinary of desert travellers, part of our global heritage would be lost. Not only that: we wouldn't know it was lost, because so little of what the great man saw on his peregrinations had ever been seen by westerners before.

Maybe we should all become a bit more like Thesiger in our outlook on the world we live in. If his work has a sub-text, it is that nothing can ever be taken for granted. Marshes will be drained; tribal people will be driven from their homelands, while ancient cultures will go the way of all flesh. Maybe he knew that the photograph has the power to ensure that while even the greatest of mankind's monuments can crumble at the hands of people masquerading as visionaries, their memory will, thanks to the art and technology he pioneered, remain inviolate.



Creative space...

Mar: 8-13, 2016

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Mar: 14-20, 2016

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AUTUMN WORKSHOPS 2016

PHOTOBOOK DESIGN | EDDIE EPHRAUMS & ANDREW NADOLSKI

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READER GALLERY

Each month we publish the very best images from all those submitted for our Reader Gallery. Turn to page 84 to find out how to enter your images. This month's winner is...



Tracey Whitefoot

I've been a photographer for almost as long as I can remember, and in 2006 I gave up my job in sales to turn my hobby into a profession. In my commercial work I take many different types of images for my clients, and over the last decade I have built a thriving photography business.

Once the pressures of getting established eased, I began to enjoy taking pictures for myself again, and started going out a lot in my local area. I am particularly drawn to shooting at sunrise, as I love the feeling of having the world to myself as the new day begins. There is nothing quite like watching the light on the landscape change; the satisfaction of being in the right place at the right time to capture it is something that makes me feel more alive than anything else ever has.

My creative approach to photography has always been emotional rather than technical. While the 'rules' are important, I think it's good to challenge yourself to come up with something different. When I approach a location that has been captured many times before, and am lucky enough to get a moment of magical light, the thought process can go out of the window. If I have time to work with a location more, I love seeking out unusual viewpoints and compositions.

My ambition as a photographer is to travel as much as possible, capturing great moments of light all over the world. The most important thing for me is to convey the emotion I feel when making a good image. If I can do that, I'm happy. As well as my commercial work, I have had two solo exhibitions of my images: A Winter's Song in 2011 and Chasing the Light in 2013.

Hometown Nottingham
Occupation Freelance photographer
Photography experience Many years
whitefootphotography.com

above Jökulsárlón sunrise, Iceland.
Nikon D800 with Nikon 24-70mm lens at 62mm, ISO 400, 1/200sec at f/8





WHY WE LOVE THEM...

Although Iceland has become one of the planet's most visited photography destinations, it still takes a skilful eye to tease out strong compositions from the otherworldly landscapes there. Tracey has carefully produced three wonderful and distinctly different images of ice that come together to tell a story of the location. You can see her attention to detail and emotional attachment to the subject in each photograph.

left Crystal cave, Iceland.

Nikon D800 with Nikon 16-35mm lens at 16mm, ISO 800, 1/60sec at f/6.3

opposite Inside the glacier, Iceland.

Nikon D800 with Nikon 16-35mm lens at 16mm, ISO 1600, 1/2000sec at f/6.3

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A photographer's guide to life on Earth

*This month **Chris Weston** explores how original ideas are born in the heart, not the mind. The secret to creating groundbreaking imagery, he concludes, is to follow our instincts rather than being driven by knowledge alone*

PART 10 Leading from the heart

'It is through science that we prove but through intuition that we discover' – Jules H Poincare.



At 9.07pm Central Standard Time on 13 April 1970, a small explosion occurred. Under normal circumstances, hardly anyone would have noticed. But the circumstances weren't normal and the whole world sat up because the blast happened in one of the oxygen tanks of the Apollo 13 space rocket when it was over 200,000 miles from Earth.

Over the course of the following few hours, many things happened. One of those things was figuring out a way to filter the air in the Lunar Module for far longer than originally planned. Without filtered air, the astronauts would die. The solution was to use the lithium hydroxide 'scrubbers' from the Command Module. But there was a problem. The scrubbers were square and needed to fit snugly into a round container.

A team of NASA engineers was tasked with finding a solution, using only materials available to the stranded astronauts. Just 23.5 hours later, the engineers solved the seemingly unsolvable puzzle. In space, the astronauts could breathe again – literally – and the mission ended 56 hours later when they splashed down in the Pacific Ocean.

Whatever we do in life, at some time we will face a problem. For NASA engineers it can be life or death. For the rest of us, it's rarely that dramatic, even though individually our problems may seem dire at the time. For athletes it can be poor form, for parents it can be a misbehaving child. For employers it can be an under-performing employee, for employees it can be an errant boss. For artists like you and me it can be a creative block.

Which is exactly what happened to me in August during my trip to Alaska.

left Fifty-five hours, 54 minutes and 53 seconds after lift-off, Apollo 13 suffered a near disastrous explosion. Creative thinking enabled the astronauts to return to Earth safely in what NASA described 'a successful failure'.



When your best isn't good enough

If you've been following this series you will know that Katmai National Park is my favourite photographic location and that brown bears are at the top of my favourite species list. So when I set off to return to Katmai in late August, for my tenth visit in 15 years, I was, as always, filled with anticipation. Now, it's true to say that I was leading a photography trip, so my personal work wasn't my primary aim. Even so, at the end of each day, when I'd downloaded and reviewed my images, I was beset by feelings of disappointment.

It's not that the images were particularly poor or technically lacking in any way. On the face of it, they were perfectly OK. But that's the point. They were OK, and for me 'OK' just isn't good enough.

Looking through the images, closed away in my cabin, what occurred to me was that they were all pretty much the same as the images I'd taken before, on previous visits to the park. There was nothing new – no new story, no new angle. The images were just the same-old, same-old. And that got me thinking – of course!

left and above I was disappointed with my images from Katmai, this year. Although they were technically sound, they lacked creativity and revealed nothing new beyond images I have taken before. I was stuck in the past, connected to old energy, and not living the moment.



above Creating visually effective intentional motion blur isn't easy when your subject is running straight towards you. My idea was to blur the water, giving a sense of motion, while keeping the lead horse's head perfectly sharp (to reveal detail and form). To achieve a similar effect with the horses running past you rather than towards you (left to right or vice versa) is easier and uses the panning

technique to keep the subject in a consistent space in the viewfinder. In this case, however, the direction of movement (head on) ruled out panning and required a different technique. I used the zoom function of my lens (70-200mm) to keep the lead horse a consistent size in the image space while a slow shutter speed (1/50sec) created motion in the splashing water.

Knowledge is the enemy of creativity

Our creativity isn't solely the result of our ability. In fact, knowledge is often creativity's worst enemy. Certainly creativity requires ability – having talent, skill or proficiency in a certain area – but the blue-fire voltage that arcs through us to ignite the creative idea, comes from a part of us much deeper than the brain.

For genuine creativity to flow we also need creative power. Creative power is connected to the energy that all matter emits, and accessing it enables us to direct its flow, which we do by focusing our attention and awareness. And because that energy is in constant flux we cannot discern it with our minds because the brain interprets what we feel through our senses using the knowledge it already has, ignoring other potentials and possibilities. Therefore, if we always act from a state of knowing, creative outcomes, if they occur at all, are purely the random consequences of external forces.

To be consciously creative, we must travel into the unknown and go to places beyond the experience of our mind. We must learn to navigate, sometimes from instinct, what often we call 'a gut feeling', rather than from knowledge alone, heeding the wisdom of Einstein, who once said, 'Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.'

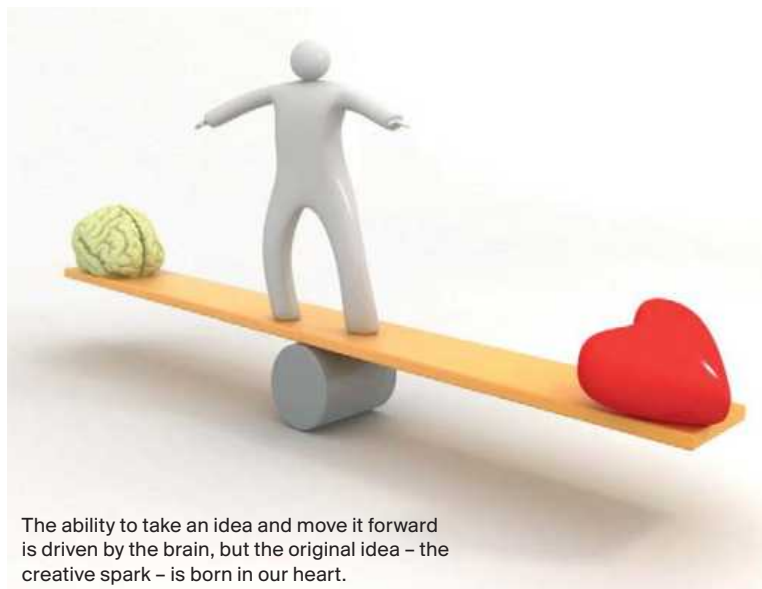
Creating something out of nothing

Without instinct, without feelings, creativity doesn't exist.

Think about this a moment and you may recognise the symptoms. If you truly love your job, for example, you are constantly coming up with new ideas – different ways of doing things, beneficial tasks or innovative directions for the business

to follow. On the other hand, if you dislike your work, you are more likely to simply turn up (or not), do what is asked of you and go home – you go through the motions. Nothing more.

In Alaska, in my photography, I was in a state of just turning up. It's not that I'd fallen out of love with photography or Katmai or brown bears. Simply it was that my mind was focused on other things, namely leading the group and keeping them safe in bear country. My connection to the wildlife and the land was a secondary consideration. I wasn't feeling those connections anew, rather I was relying on historic feelings that my mind had



The ability to take an idea and move it forward is driven by the brain, but the original idea – the creative spark – is born in our heart.

© Anton Sokolov/Shutterstock

turned into thoughts and stored away for future use. My images weren't new because I was disconnected with the present and I was making photographic decisions based on memory.

In order to create something fresh out of nothing at all we must first connect to the flow of energy as it is in the moment and consciously raise emotions. For example, when members of the 'tiger team' who were assembled for the Apollo 13 rescue mission were later asked about the events, there was a single common factor. When they were sat around the table that night with a collection of boxes and tubes and pieces of string, set with the task of saving the lives of their three colleagues who were stranded in outer space, they didn't start with what they knew (that you can't fit perfectly a square peg into a round hole). Instead, they began the task with the feeling that they would succeed because they were determined that their friends were not going to die that day.

The creative spark that resulted in the solution came not from their heads but from their hearts.

Inside source

True creativity cannot be achieved by acting on what we already know. That was the mistake I made in Alaska. Realising my error, on a subsequent photo shoot in the Camargue, another location I have been to often, I set out with revived awareness. I had a clear intention – to visualise a new story – and then allowed myself to be guided by intuition. Rather than accessing old memories

I remained open to what I was feeling presently at every level of my being, and was truly aware of the source of those emotions.

From this new standpoint, original ideas for images emerged. Visually effective intentional motion blur is very difficult to achieve when photographing an animal running straight towards you. But in my connection with the prevailing flow of energy, the spark of an idea ignited in my belly. I used my experience to hone a completely new technique, and after many attempts and a lot of practice, my knowledge brought the idea to life.

For a long time I have believed that photographs are created in the heart. Now I understand why. The ability to create is driven by the brain. It is our individual capacity to consciously understand our emotions. But the source of our creativity lies in the emotions themselves – the emotions that led a team of engineers, fast running out of time, to save the lives of their three friends; and the emotions that re-connected me to land and the wildlife I love.

I am thankful for the problems that come my way. Everyone should be. The measure of our lives is not the absence or avoidance of problems. It is how we affect the outcomes. How we face our troubles characterises what happens next and defines who we are, not what the past has made us.

In the next chapter of 'A photographer's guide to life on Earth', Chris Weston explores the differences between astronauts and astronomers and asks the question 'What type of photographer am I?'



Unlike my time in Alaska, in the Camargue I was open to new feelings and emotions; in a state of awareness.

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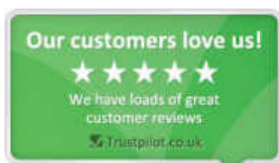


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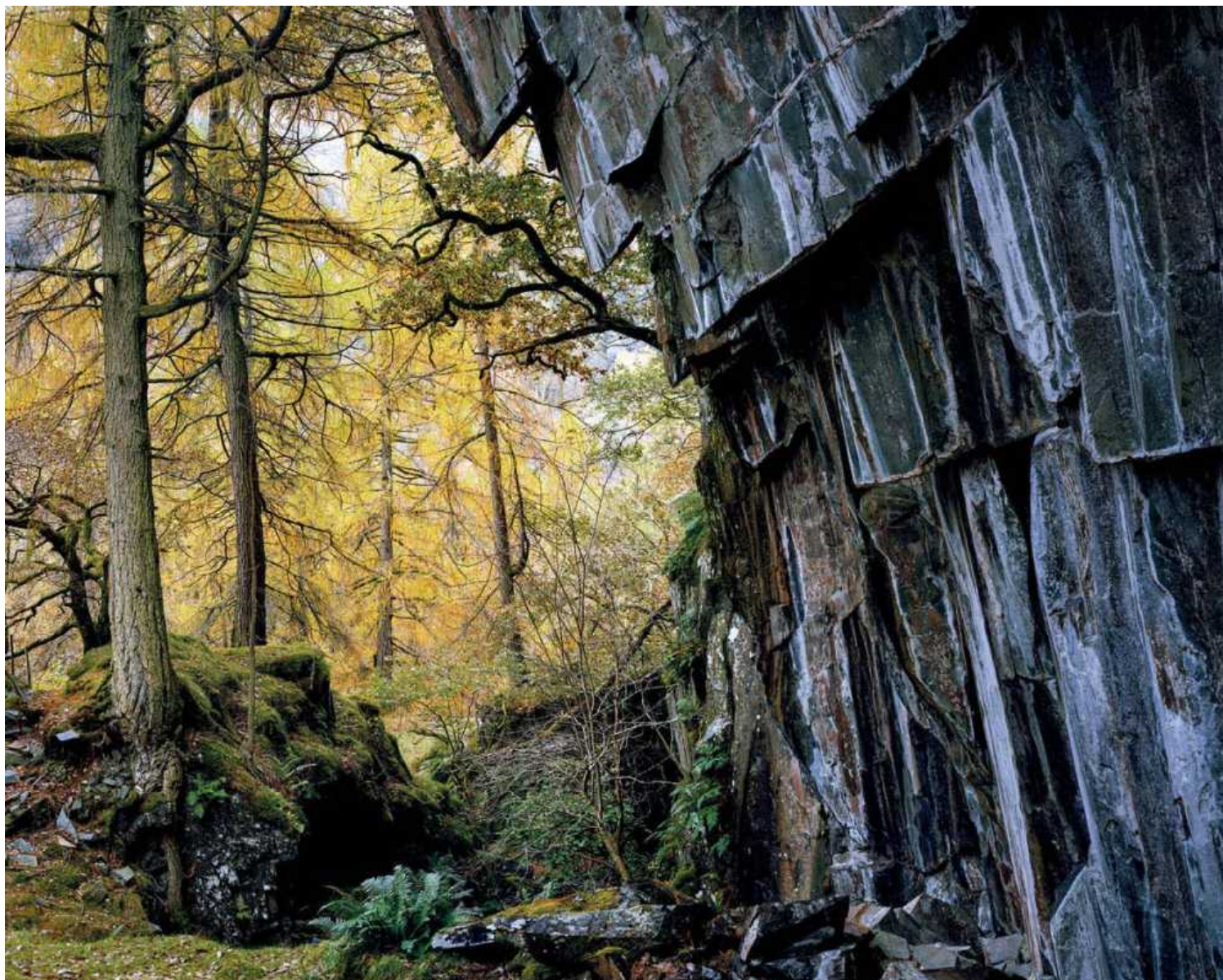
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Each year the Art and Framing Awards are held by the Fine Art Trade Guild, of which Point101 is a printer member. Up against several other nominees we are thrilled to have received the recognition and won the award. Visit our website to upload and preview your images or call us to see how we can help you fulfill your projects.



Take-a-View Landscape Photographer of the Year 2015

Now in its ninth year, this prestigious contest consistently brings out the very best in UK landscape photography. Here are some of our favourites from the winning and commended entries, including Andy Farrer's coastal photograph that scooped the overall winner prize



previous page

WINNER – LIVING THE VIEW (ADULT)

Lizzie Shepherd

Zigzag, Wensleydale, North Yorkshire

This was an opportune moment if ever there was one. We stopped at the top of a small hill in Wensleydale as a mini blizzard approached, and I noticed a wonderfully formed zigzag dry stone wall. Even luckier, a tiny figure could be seen walking in the field beyond. I just had time to get one photograph before the walker disappeared behind a little hillock and the moment was gone forever.

Nikon D800E with 70-200mm f/4 lens at 180mm, ISO 400, 1/100sec at f/11, processed in Lightroom with basic adjustments, Raw file double processed to balance land and sky, and blended as layers in Adobe Photoshop CC
lizzieshepherd.com

above

HIGHLY COMMENDED – CLASSIC VIEW (ADULT)

Joseph Wright

Abandoned quarry, Low Hows Wood, Borrowdale valley, Cumbria

An image from a series of work that explores places in the countryside where, even when close to humankind, you can experience a sense of wildness and, at times, still enjoy solitude, if you so choose. Here, on a typical damp and misty Lakeland day, I wanted to capture the nature of the place; the omnipresent tension between man and nature with non-native species of trees wilding the long abandoned quarry, creating a new modern nature. *Canham Standard 8x10 large format camera with Fuji Fujinon W 250mm f/6.7 lens, Kodak Portra 400, 5sec at f/64, film negative self-developed and drum scanned to digitise, levels adjusted and film base colour cast corrected in Adobe Photoshop*
josephwright.co.uk

below

COMMENDED – YOUR VIEW (ADULT)

Tommy Martin

Portals II, Penrith, Cumbria

This is an image of forester's hut in Beacon Edge Woods, near Penrith. It is from an ongoing series I'm working on, of images of lit doorways. *Nikon D7000 with Nikkor 17-55mm f/2.8 lens, ISO 400, 1/250sec at f/8, flash fixed inside hut and fired by a radio trigger, processed in Adobe Lightroom, including extensive colour temperature adjustments and dodging and burning*

tommymartin.me/portfolios/landscape_collected/index

overleaf

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2015

Andy Farrer

Bat's Head, Dorset

Snow this far south on the Jurassic Coast is a fairly uncommon event and it was not until February 2015 that I managed to reach some of my favourite parts of the coast when snow had fallen. As incredible as it was to see the arch of Durdle Door covered in snow, this view, looking in the opposite direction, was every bit as captivating. The encroaching tide, revealing the warm shingle beneath, provided an enjoyable distraction for a few minutes. *Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Carl Zeiss 50mm f/1.4 lens, ISO 100, 2sec at f/13, polariser, Lee 1.2 ND and 0.3 ND grad, basic white balance, vibrance and brightness adjustments in Adobe Lightroom CC*
andyfarrer.co.uk











opposite (top)

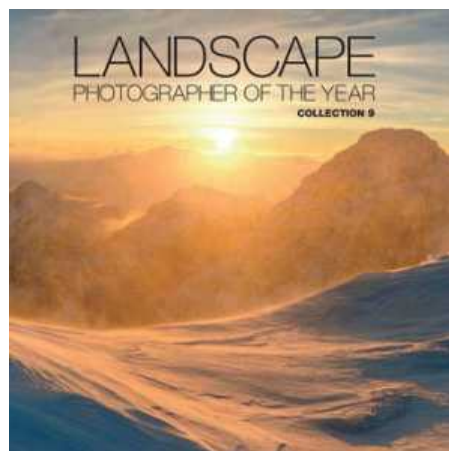
RUNNER-UP – CLASSIC VIEW (ADULT)

Mark Littlejohn

Aira Point in mist, Ullswater, Cumbria

I had been out since before dawn, hunting the right conditions in the Eden Valley. They didn't arrive so, on a hunch, I drove down to the far end of Ullswater to find a lovely late mist rolling down past Aira Point. By this time the sun was starting to rise over Place Fell, giving me the perfect combination of light and mist. These old, weatherworn trees made the perfect focal point for the shot.

Nikon D800 with Zeiss 18mm lens, ISO 200, 1/500sec at f/8, split-toned in Adobe Lightroom 5 and finished in Adobe Photoshop CC
markljphotography.co.uk



opposite (bottom)

WINNER – URBAN VIEW (ADULT)

Paul Mitchell

South Gare, Teesside

The first time I visited this location I was doubtful of its potential. Firstly, you have to negotiate the urban sprawl that is Redcar, and then drive down the perimeter road of a huge steelworks. You will, however, be rewarded when you eventually arrive on a desolate spit of reclaimed land called South Gare, situated at the mouth of the river Tees. This was my third visit here, and on this occasion I settled on a viewpoint among the sand dunes overlooking the steelworks, with the marram grass and fishermen's huts in the foreground. It was then just a waiting game until the giant blast furnaces in the distance began to belch out columns of super-heated steam.

Nikon D7100 with 17-55mm f/2.8 lens at 30mm, ISO 100, 1/100sec at f/9, Raw file processed in Adobe Lightroom, with black & white conversion in Photoshop CS5

paulmitchellphotography.co.uk

above

RUNNER-UP – LIVING THE VIEW (ADULT)

Nadir Khan

A ribbon of sunlight, Snowdonia, Gwynedd

I was shooting with some mountain bikers around Snowdonia, and was captivated by the light on the crest of the ridge with the snow-dusted bulk of Y Lliwedd in the background.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 70-200mm f/4 lens at 104mm, ISO 400, 1/1000sec at f/7.1, basic adjustments in Adobe Lightroom 4 and Photoshop CS6
nadirkhan.co.uk

GET THE BOOK!

Landscape Photographer of the Year – Collection 9, featuring all the winning and commended images plus a selection of other highly rated photographs from the competition, is available now (AA Publishing, hardback, ISBN 9780749577261, £25).



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Vanda Ralevska

Originally from the Czech Republic, London-based Vanda Ralevska is a landscape photographer whose artistic preoccupation with beauty brings out a distinctly poetic side to her work. Nick Smith puts her in the spotlight



NICK SMITH How do you describe your work?

VANDA RALEVSKA I describe myself mostly as a landscape photographer. I do a little impressionistic photography, but that isn't my main thing. I quite like to work with images that somehow convey the atmosphere of my experience more than anything else. I do like to produce beautiful work with softer pastel colours, but there is a darker, stormier side to what I do, with rain and reflections.

NS In real life you are an IT consultant...

VR That's right. Photography provides a welcome antidote to my professional world of exact numbers. I did maths and physics at university and when I came to the UK I did an MSC in computer science. So although I have a technical side to me, I don't really use a lot of equipment. What I really enjoy about photography is the solitude and the silence it brings, away from my busy professional life.

NS Why did you move to the UK?

VR One of the reasons I moved to the UK was that when I visited the first time I was smitten by the beauty of the countryside, especially the coast. Growing up in an inland country I could only dream about the sea, and the closest I got to it was on holidays to the Black Sea in Bulgaria and Romania. So the first time I got on the ferry and saw the White Cliffs of Dover, I knew it would not be the last time.

NS How did you get started in photography?

VR I was about 16 when my dad gave me a red Konica camera. Back then it wasn't so usual for a teenager to own a camera, and so it was quite a precious thing to have. We didn't have much money and





I don't think he realised the significance of what he had given me. That's when I started not just taking photos, but enjoying being outside too. I once got into trouble climbing into a derelict castle I had been drawn to due to its decaying atmosphere.

NS A lot of your work is now shot close to home?

VR Yes. Bushy Park in south-west London is one of my favourite places, along with Richmond Park and, along the river, Dorney Lake. You can find beauty on your doorstep quite easily if you look for it. Part of my adventure is to get the photographs I want close to home.

NS Is being familiar with the subject important?

VR Definitely. When I walk from

Waterloo to Canon Street, where I work, I take pictures along the river, and there is always something to see. My favourite time to photograph is the early morning, with the light when the day is beginning.

NS You have examples of your own poetry on your website...

VR The artistic or poetic side of me has always been there. I come from a family of musicians and I played the flute at the age of six. And for me poetry is the same as photography or any art. It's about the feelings that are evoked in you. I tend to give my photographs poetic titles. Some people would argue that we should leave it to the viewer to title the picture. But I do it to show what I feel.

NS At what stage do you think you are now?

VR I'm developing, really. I'm just on a journey and I'm enjoying that. A few years back I tried to turn my photography into a business, but I ended up taking pictures for other people, and I stopped enjoying what I was doing. My passion for photography was dying and so I decided to go back to the creative journey, wherever it takes me.

opposite (top)
As dawn greets the day.

opposite (bottom)
Sea fever.

above Morning magic.

VANDA'S TOP TIPS

» **One thing I never go on a shoot without is...** an open mind. I try not to pre-visualise anything because part of the fun is to explore where you are.

» **My one piece of advice would be to...** find the extraordinary in the ordinary. There is beauty everywhere and that is the reward.

» **Something I try to avoid is...** crowds. Don't get me wrong, I love people and have a lot of friends, but when I am photographing I prefer to be alone.

VANDA'S CRITICAL MOMENTS

To see more of Vanda's work, visit mylenscapes.co.uk

1982 My dad gave me my first camera – a compact Konica film camera.

1986 Took my first favourite photograph: autumnal leaves fallen on to trees reflected in a pond.

1997 Moved to the UK where my passion for photography grew into an inseparable part of my life.

2011 Abandoned commercial photography in favour of own artistic pursuits.

2012 Co-founded a community called Landscapes by Women. First public talk, at a photography school in Belgium.

2015 Joined the Arena Photographers group. Organised the Mistresses of Light exhibition in London's OXO Gallery with Beata Moore.

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NATURE ZONE

DISCOVER

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Life in the wild

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photo guide

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with nature

82 **Steve Young's**
On the wing



STANDOUT SUBJECTS

Brown hares are among Laurie Campbell's nature highlights this month

Life in the Wild

Having camped out at the edge of a field with the aim of photographing fox cubs, Laurie Campbell is glad his camera is set up and ready when a pair of roe deer appear early the next morning and make their way towards his hiding place

An inquisitive roe buck – it came so close that I needed to slowly rotate my camera to shoot this portrait in order to get it in the frame. The deer looks a little untidy due to it casting its winter coat.

Nikon D4 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens, ISO 800, 1/400sec at f/4, tripod, hide



At the time of writing, in late September, I'm looking ahead to winter and making plans to continue working on a shy species of mammal that I've only really photographed sporadically, and usually through chance encounters. Wherever I've lived, I have always been aware that roe deer were present in the surrounding countryside, and I suppose it was inevitable that I would bump into them when out looking for badgers and otters. Roe deer are what are known as crepuscular animals, meaning they are largely active towards dawn and dusk, so it's not surprising that there would be an overlap with the times that my mustelids were around. Getting to grips with shy species obviously requires careful fieldwork and an understanding of the biology and behaviour of the subject. Above all, it takes time – an increasingly rare commodity these days.

Earlier this year, on the first day of May and after several days of being stuck in front of my computers, I decided that enough was enough and that I simply had to break my routine and do something unconventional. Late that evening, I packed a rucksack with a bivvy bag, camouflage netting, sleeping mat, flask of peppermint tea, cameras and my trio of most used Nikkor lenses – 17-35mm, 200mm macro and 500mm – together with a 1.4x teleconverter and tripod. I then set off into the countryside around my village. My aim was to camp out beside a hedgerow towards the top of a hill bordering a field where, from the days of using film, I knew of an old fox earth that I hoped might be active and have cubs. I had been meaning to check this out for a while, and was aware that I couldn't leave it much longer because the barley crop would soon be too tall and obscure the view to the opposite side of the field containing the fox earth.

By midnight I was settled in a sheltered spot beneath a bushy hawthorn hedgerow. Tucking myself beneath the overhanging branches, I was able to hook my camouflage netting on the thorny



The roe doe and buck look back at me after retreating a short distance upon hearing the sound of my camera shutter.

Nikon D4 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens, ISO 800, 1/400sec at f/4, tripod, hide

branches to form a screen that draped down to partly hide my position. As an afterthought, I set up my tripod, attached my Nikon D4 and 500mm f/4 lens and added a waterproof cover before angling it down towards the ground to prevent condensation forming on the front element of the lens overnight. I'm so pleased I did, because the following morning I woke to see a female roe deer walking across the field towards my position. Using the smooth action of my fluid tripod head, I managed to gingerly tilt the camera upwards and home in without her noticing. When she got to within about 30 metres, she paused,

stared in my direction and then, to my amazement, came closer. There seemed little doubt that she was more curious than afraid, and I could only assume that she had spotted her reflection in the front of my lens. With my attention focused on the doe, I hadn't noticed a buck approaching from one side, where it too paused to stand and stare. Both were less than 15 metres away, and at that range they heard the camera shutter. Although they didn't immediately flee, it was game over, for that morning at least. In future, I will be using a soundproof cover (Blimp Muffle) that I recently bought from a French firm called Jama.



A view of my hiding place and over the arable field to the opposite hedgerow.

Nikon D3x with Nikon 17-35mm f/2.8 AFS lens, ISO 250, 1/100sec at f/7.1, handheld

LAURIE'S FACTFILE

where to look for roe deer

» It's difficult to get a precise figure for the number of roe deer living in the UK, but in Scotland alone it has recently been suggested that they could now outnumber the population of red deer, which stands at over 350,000. Unlike red deer, which largely live on open ground in herds, roe deer prefer more cover and are comparatively solitary.

» Although most roe deer are quite shy and require great stealth and patience to get close to, across the country there are variations and it's not unusual to discover individuals and small groups that are active much later in the day than usual – often in unexpected places. Some years ago, for example, a small population became established in a graveyard close to Glasgow city centre.

» There must be other such instances all over the UK. The main reason for this is that in situations where the deer aren't culled, numbers increase due to few natural predators, and they simply become more conditioned to seeing humans and experiencing nothing bad happening. This is particularly so in locations where deer are living adjacent to areas where there is a lot of human traffic, both on foot and in vehicles; where this activity is predictable, it rarely encroaches on the areas where they live.

» Looking for field signs is a good way of starting to identify areas where roe deer may be present. They are creatures of habit, so there should be regular trails that they use when moving between feeding and lying-up places during the day. Where these trails cross bare, muddy ground, look for the distinctive 'slot' marks made by their hooves. In summer, look for signs of frayed bark on tree saplings, about a metre above ground, where bucks thrash their antlers to remove the velvet layer in preparation for the rut. Droppings are dark grey-green and deposited in loose heaps.

What to shoot this month...

Laurie's December highlights



▲ The concept of photographing frost on grass can be interpreted in so many ways and means different things to different people. At one extreme, you can use a wideangle lens up close and from a low viewpoint to photograph a tussock of frosted grasses as an 'anchor' for the foreground of a portrait-format winter landscape image. At the other extreme, a close-focusing zoom or macro lens can be used to record close-up details of the frost itself. Sometimes, it's just nice to keep things simple by concentrating on a single stem.

Nikon D3X with Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 VR lens fitted with Canon 500D close-up lens, ISO 100, 1/400sec at f/13, beanbag



▲ Perhaps with the exception of some species of sphagnum mosses (*Sphagnum* sp), peat bogs and moorland habitats may seem to have little in the way of brightly coloured subjects to photograph in winter. Look closer, however, and you may find some species of **Cladonia lichens** with distinctive scarlet-red structures on the end of their stalks. These are actually the sexual fruiting body of the lichen, and are interesting macro subjects.

Nikon D3X with Voigtlander 120mm f/2.5 APO-Lanthar macro lens, ISO 100, 1/4sec at f/16, mirror-lock, cable release, tripod



▲ **Blackbirds** (*Turdus merula*) are common enough garden birds, and being one of the group of species loosely known as 'softbills' they can't easily eat bird seed, so apples are an ideal bait to tempt them where you want them. Unlike smaller items of suitable food such as mealworms, which can be visible in the bird's bill before it swallows them, apples can be sunk into the ground or in snow, making them virtually invisible when photographed from a low angle. They also 'hold' the birds in one spot and so are ideal if you have a specific composition in mind.
Nikon D3 with Nikon 500mm f/4 AFS lens, ISO 250, 1/160sec at f/6.3, beanbag, hide



▲ Unlike their mountain hare (*Lepus timidus*) cousins, **brown hares** (*Lepus europaeus*) don't turn white in winter so they are obviously more visible in snowy weather. They do, however, lie low throughout most of the daylight hours, in depressions known as forms, which they create in grass and other vegetation. With the latter being at a low ebb in mid-winter, brown hares respond by taking cover beneath hedges and in woodlands, so following their tracks in snow may give clues to the whereabouts of their winter hiding places.

Nikon D3 with 500mm f/4 AFS lens fitted with Nikon TC-14E 1.4x teleconverter, ISO 800, 1/800sec at f/6.3, handheld

MORE SEASONAL SUBJECTS...

Flora

Viper's bugloss (*Echium vulgare*) – a tall plant that flowers from May to September, but the dead stems can persist into winter.

Mistletoe (*Viscum album*) – an obvious winter plant with porcelain-like white berries for the coming festive season.

Red dead-nettle (*Lamium purpureum*) – a 'weed' that can still be in flower well into November.

Fauna

Sea slater (*Ligia oceanica*) – think of this as a slater/woodlouse at least three times as big as the garden variety but found on the seashore.

Flat periwinkle (*Littorina littoralis*) – generally lemon-yellow in colour, this is one of the most attractive shellfish in the UK.

Purple sunstar (*Solaster endeca*) – typically a bright pink-purple in colour, this robust starfish can grow up to 40cm across. Occasionally washed ashore.

WORLD WILDLIFE SPECTACLES



© Shane Cross/Shutterstock

Manatees, USA

Although they are known as sea cows, manatees are actually more closely related to elephants. Weighing up to 1,300lb, they are large, slow-moving animals but, powered by their strong tails, they are graceful swimmers. There are three species of manatee, including a large population that roams along the coast of North America between Brazil and south-east Florida; in winter, when sea temperatures drop, hundreds of manatees congregate inland to seek out warmer waters, and Kings Bay – a spring-fed lake 65 miles north of Tampa – is a popular destination. Between December and April they are easy to see in the bay's crystal-clear waters.

Asian wrinkle-lipped bats, Myanmar

Asian wrinkle-lipped bats usually roost in caves in large, densely packed colonies, emerging at dusk in huge numbers. In Yangan, Myanmar's capital, the species has a rather more glamorous setting for its mass exodus. Before darkness descends in the city, hundreds of thousands of bats emerge from beneath the eaves of the religious buildings surrounding Shwedagon Paya, Myanmar's most revered shrine. Feeding on insects, mostly moths, they form mesmerising, twisting spirals in the air.

8 WINTER NATURE WALKS

The days may be short, but the landscape can look simply stunning at this time of year, and there's no better way to enjoy the scenery than embarking on a brisk winter walk. Heading out into the countryside can also offer some exciting nature viewing opportunities; against a stark backdrop, wildlife can be easier to spot, and a covering of snow provides the chance to study animal tracks. From invigorating hikes to gentle ambles, here are some top nature walks to enjoy this season...



© Simon Geary/Shutterstock

1 Elan Valley Trail, Powys

Comprising 70 square miles of moorland, bog, river and reservoir, the Elan Estate is a stunning landscape and a haven for wildlife such as red kites. The Elan Valley Trail is a linear route starting in Cwmdaiddwr, just west of Rhayader, and finishing at Craig Goch Dam.

Distance 9 miles

elanvalley.org.uk

2 Rothiemurchus Forest and the Iron Bridge, Highland

One of the largest surviving areas of ancient woodland in Europe, Rothiemurchus is a stronghold for red squirrels, capercaillies, crested tits and Scottish crossbills. This gentle walk, from Coylumbidge to the iron bridge over the Am Beanaidh, takes you through some wonderful Caledonian pine forest and has some fantastic views of the Cairngorms.

Distance 4.75 miles

walkhighlands.co.uk/cairngorms/rothiemurchus.shtml

2 Malham Cove, Malham Tarn and Gordale Scar, North Yorkshire

Starting at Malham village, this circular walk takes in some of the Yorkshire Dales' most spectacular limestone landscapes – Gordale Scar, Malham Cove and Janet's Foss waterfall are just a few of the highlights.

Distance 7.2 miles

walkingenglishman.com/dales17.htm

4 Bog Meadows, County Antrim

Despite being situated next to a motorway on the outskirts of Belfast, Bog Meadows is a haven for wildlife, including many overwintering ducks, geese and swans. There are over two miles of 'access for all' paths around the reserve; a mosaic of reedbeds, ponds, streams and woodland.

Distance 2 miles

ulsterwildlife.org/reserves/bog-meadows

5 Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire

One of the last remnants of undrained fenland in lowland Britain, Wicken Fen is glorious in winter. With four hides en-route, the Adventurers' Trail is a great way to see the reserve's many birds, including hen harriers, short-eared and barn owls, wildfowl and winter thrushes.

Distance 3 miles

nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen

6 Teign Valley classic circuit, Devon

Starting at Castle Drogo, the walk follows the Hunter's Path high above the Teign Valley before dropping down to the river. As well as offering amazing views over Dartmoor, it is a great way to explore the wildlife of the river Teign and surrounding area.

Distance 3.5 miles

nationaltrust.org.uk/castle-drogo

7 Ashridge Estate boundary trail, Buckinghamshire

This long but rewarding Chilterns walk takes in some of Ashridge Estate's most special features, including Ivinghoe Beacon and the wonderful Frithsden Beeches. The trees may be bare, but that makes it easier to spot fallow and muntjac deer.

Distance 16 miles

nationaltrust.org.uk/ashridge-estate

8 Lindisfarne, Northumberland

The tidal island of Lindisfarne is busy with visitors in summer, but during the colder months it offers tranquility and flocks of wintering birds, notably half of the world's population of pale-bellied brent geese. At high tide, grey seals often visit the island's rocky bays.

Distance 5.5 miles

theaa.com/walks/lindisfarne-420336



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Images: Brydon Thomason



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A rare family feast

Having located a family of otters on the coast of Shetland, Richard Shucksmith watches in wonder as the mother pulls a succession of octopuses from the water to feed to her cubs

It's November on Shetland, and a cool south-easterly wind bites at my cheeks as the tip of sun starts to peek above the horizon. As I near the coast a familiar sound catches my ears over the crashing waves. Carefully I make my way down the steep bank and on to the shore. Listening to the repeated, high-pitched squeaks of the otter cubs, I estimate that they are several hundred metres further along the coast.

Scanning ahead with binoculars, I see an arched back, followed by a tail, as an otter dives, hunting close to the shore. On the coast I see the cub that is making most of the 'squeaks' – contact calls to its mother. Somewhere close by are its two siblings, hidden by rocks and probably eating

food brought in by their mum. Carefully I move into a better position, where I can see all three cubs and their mother, who is fishing just offshore. Suddenly she surfaces among a mass of tentacles. When she reaches the shore, the octopus covers her head, and two cubs race towards her to grab the meal. With a tentacle in each of the cubs' mouths, a tug of war ensues. Mum heads back out to sea to fish, leaving the cubs to fight it out.

Within seconds, unexpectedly, she surfaces again among eight tentacles. She heads back in with another octopus in her mouth, and the third cub rushes across to her to claim the meal and quickly brings the prey up the shore, away from the other two cubs. Unfortunately it sets

about eating the octopus so close that I can't focus with my long lens. Once again, the mother heads out to hunt, leaving the cubs to feed, but within minutes she surfaces yet again with another octopus. On reaching the shore, one of the cubs that had been fighting over an octopus rushes over to claim the new prize. All three cubs sit on the shore, each eating its own octopus.

I find otters and their behaviour fascinating, and by building up an understanding of these charismatic animals I have been able to capture some unique images. Before now I had only ever seen otters occasionally catching octopus – to see one taking three from the sea in quick succession and feeding them to her cubs was a rare treat.



On the wing

When an extremely rarely seen isabelline wheatear turns up on the north-east coast of England, Steve Young takes the opportunity to update his coverage of the species

Isabelline wheatear is a birder's bird rather than a casual birdwatcher's species. They can be difficult to tell apart from female northern wheatears, but some of the main features can be seen in this image. Note the more extensive black on the tail, overall lack of contrast between wing and mantle colours and the obvious dark feathers (alula) at the 'shoulder' of the bird.

Over the 30-plus years that I've been photographing the rare and scarcer species of birds in the UK, I've pointed my lens at many different ones. Some I've seen many times, while others have become common and are not even considered rarities anymore. But there are some that have remained very rare and still only occur once every year or two.

Isabelline wheatear is one such bird. In Europe it breeds in the southern Russian habitat of steppe and open countryside, wintering in Africa. Migrants are very occasionally blown off course in easterly winds; I saw my one and only at Spurn in Yorkshire a long time ago, in the early 1990s, so when I was offered a lift late last November to see another one at Seaton Carew in Cleveland I thought it was about time I added it to my digital photo collection.

The bird had chosen a beach as its favoured location and could be seen

flitting around bits of tidal debris catching insects. It was showing quite well but was not yet close enough to photograph. As the small crowd thinned out and people left, however, it became easier to approach and it even flew closer towards me as I knelt down on the sand with my lens mounted on tripod, waiting.

As I looked through my viewfinder, it struck me how dull and unexciting a species it is. If it were a regular bird in Britain you probably wouldn't look at it twice, but because it is very rare it was worth the effort; it is a fantastic bird to see here, but it's not as good-looking as our very own northern wheatear.

All these thoughts were going through my mind as I focused on the bird, when it suddenly flew straight at me and landed just yards away. I pressed the shutter a few times and there was no reaction from the wheatear so I carried on, adding a converter for a few shots. The light was

so poor that the shutter speeds I was getting were not ideal; 1/125sec to 1/200sec at around ISO 1000 was the best I could achieve, and with the 1.4x converter added the shutter speed was one stop slower.

The beauty of digital means you can just carry on taking images when you would have long stopped with ISO 100 slide film, and the wheatear became more obliging as the afternoon wore on. I eventually got some images I was happy with, and as the light steadily became worse it was time to head for home.

I don't remember seeing another bird all afternoon, apart from a distant curlew on the beach, but the wheatear had chosen this spot for some reason; probably because it was totally exhausted and it was the first bit of land it came to. Whatever the reason, it had given many people a great deal of pleasure. I could only wish it well and hope it re-routed its migration radar and found a safe wintering ground.

Steve's December highlights



clockwise, from left **Blackbird (male)**. Easy to identify and nearly as easy to photograph, blackbirds look good feeding on berries.

Blackbird (female). The brown version of the male... fruit is readily eaten during the cold winter months.

Blackbird (first-year male). Duller plumage, brownish tinge to wings, duller bill and smaller eye ring all point towards a first-year male bird.

Bird of the month

The humble blackbird is one of the commonest breeding species in the UK, with almost five million breeding pairs. During winter those figures rise as more birds arrive from northern Europe.

Large numbers will be present along the east coast during autumn, mixed in with other winter visitors such as redwing and fieldfare, and these will disperse across the country during the winter months.

Blackbirds can be easy to photograph, and they come to a wide variety of foods such as berries, pears, apples, seeds, fat and mealworms. As the name suggests, males are black but females are brown, and during the winter there will be plenty of first-year males around, which have black bodies with browner wings.



BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY TIP



I see most people handholding their cameras these days; lenses with a focal length such as 80-400mm with built-in stabilisation can probably be used that way on most occasions. I have to admit there are times when I've stopped using a tripod; lenses these days are far easier to use than they used to be and I've become a little bit lazy the older I've got. I find carrying a tripod around can be a real nuisance, so I tend to use a beanbag more.

There are times when only that three-legged friend will do, though – the isabelline wheatear shoot mentioned in the main article was one such occasion. The light was so poor that even increasing the ISO to the higher thousands would have made handholding difficult, and a long stakeout holding a 500mm lens is not good for the arms and shoulders.

So, if you tend not to use a tripod at all, even with a lightweight lens, but are not achieving the sharpness you think you should be then give a tripod a go. They are a drag to carry around, but they can save the day when the light is poor.

above, from left **Black tern**. I still prefer to handhold my lens for flight shots, as I find it easier to follow the bird, even with today's improved tripod heads.

Capercaillie. In the darkness of a pine forest I could only shoot this capercaillie at 1/80sec, so was glad I had my tripod with me.

Robin. I always handhold my 80-400mm lens, and even did so when shooting this robin at 1/50sec. Deep down, though, I know the results would have been sharper and better with the lens on a tripod. Printed at this size I can get away with it, but I'd be found out if it was a full-page spread!

LOCATION OF THE MONTH



© Natural England/Peter Wakely

Seal Sands, Teesmouth National Nature Reserve, Cleveland

Set against a backdrop of heavy industry, including one of Europe's largest chemical plants, this unusual nature reserve shows how wildlife can thrive in the unlikely of environments. The surrounding industrial landscape actually brings its benefits: artificial lighting means waders can feed into the night, while limited human access ensures minimal disturbance.

Seal Sands forms the southern part of Teesmouth National Nature Reserve and is one of the largest areas of intertidal mudflats on the north-east coast of England. In winter, the reserve's resident harbour seals are joined by a large number of migratory birds, including many dabbling and diving ducks. At low tide, hundreds of waders such as knots, sanderlings, oystercatchers and dunlins feed on the mud.

Location The reserve lies halfway between Hartlepool and Redcar, three miles north-east of Middlesbrough.

Facilities There are several car parks on site and two viewing hides. The nearest toilets and refreshments are at Seaton Carew, five miles up the coast.

Access There are two well-surfaced way-marked trails across the reserve. An easy access path leads from the car park at Greatham Creek along to a disabled access hide.

Website gov.uk/government/publications/cleveland-national-nature-reserves

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IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING THIS MONTH...

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WHERE IN THE WORLD?

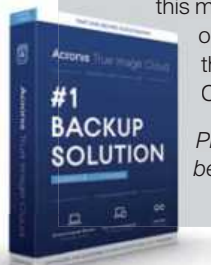
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Please include a SAE if you would like your submission returned.

PLEASE NOTE

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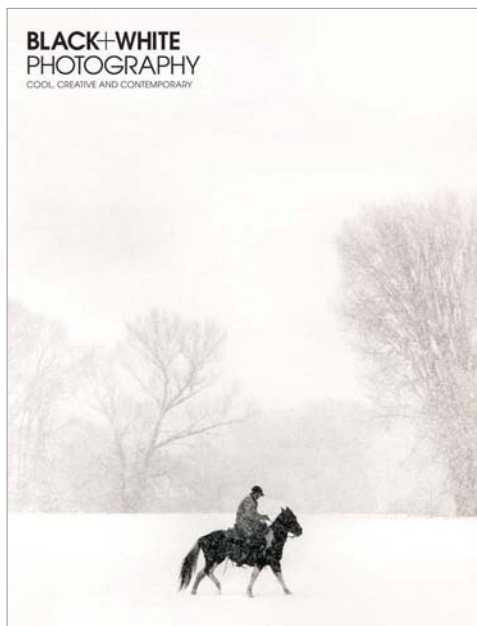
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Andy Luck takes Panasonic's latest micro-four-thirds camera for a spin

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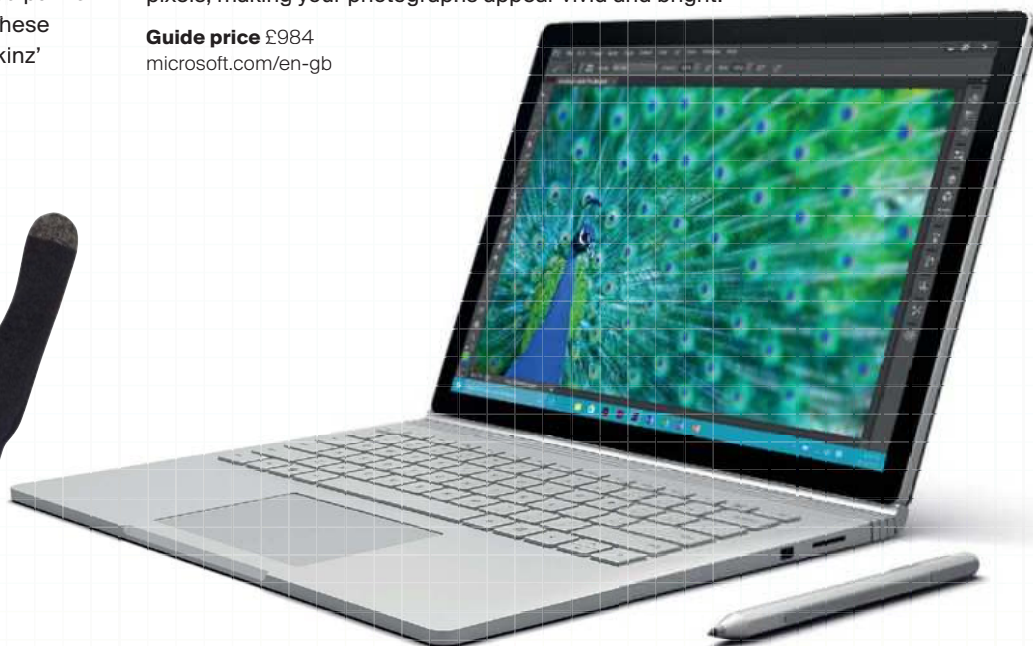
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Part of the new Windows 10 range, the Surface Book aims to rival products from Microsoft's competitors with its impressive spec and slick design. A hybrid laptop (the display is detachable and can be used as a clipboard), the Surface Book takes portability to a new level, being super lightweight (0.7kg) and just 7.7mm thick. Its super-sharp, colour rich 13.5in screen is packed with 3000x2000 pixels, making your photographs appear vivid and bright.

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microsoft.com/en-gb



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yellowpublications.co.uk



MSR Trail Lite Duo System

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Guide price £60
cascadedesigns.com



DJI Osmo

DJI is best known for its line-up of drones, but the firm has released a cool new product that's different to what you might expect. The Osmo is an integrated 12MP camera and handheld stabiliser that shoots 4K video, hyperlapse, timelapse and 360° photography. Staying rock steady with DJI's signature three-axis brushless gimbal, the Osmo comes with a DJI Inspire X3 camera, which packs a 1/2.3in Sony Exmor R sensor, native

ISO of 100-1600 (100-3200 for video), a 20mm lens with 94° field of view and DNG support. You can also attach a smartphone and use it as a screen to control the camera and adjust settings.

Guide price £549
store.dji.com



Samyang 21mm f/1.4 ED AS UMC CS lens ▼

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Guide price £124.95
multi-tool-store.co.uk



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Guide price £48
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Sony Alpha 7s II ▼

With a 24.3MP full-frame CMOS sensor, five-axis sensor-based image stabilisation, the superb Bionz X image processor, native ISO of 100 to 25,600 and a continuous shooting mode of five frames per second, it's clear to see why the mirrorless Sony Alpha 7s II has been stealing the gear headlines. With ultra high sensitivity, a wide dynamic range, internal 4K video recording capabilities and superior shooting stability, this impressive camera certainly packs a punch.

Guide price £2,499
sony.co.uk



Panasonic DMC-G7

The DMC-G7 brings a host of exciting stills and video features to a very competitive part of the camera market. **Andy Luck** finds out if it is likely to leave the others in its wake

Guide price £528 (body only)

Contact panasonic.co.uk



Almost seven years ago we reviewed the Panasonic DMC-G1. Weighing in at just 385g, body only, and 638g with the 14-45mm kit lens, the G1 was revolutionary at the time, packing near DSLR image quality – from its half-35mm, 12MP, micro-four-thirds sensor – into a tiny, lightweight body that could easily be carried around.

While Panasonic's GH series of cameras has over the years grown in bulk and weight to be close to entry-level DSLR size, the G series has stayed faithful to the original G1 design concept. The latest iteration, the G7, tips the scales at a mere 410g including battery and SD card. It also remains a very small camera for an interchangeable lens model. Like the original G1, the G7 includes a built-in pop-up flash where the

pentaprism would be on a conventional DSLR, and while it's not the most handsome camera, it looks well built with some charm in its plain design.

Like the original G1, the G7 also features a very useful fully articulating LCD screen – in the G7's case it's an excellent 3in, 1,040k-dot touchscreen. The electronic live viewfinder, at 2.36m-dots, is also superb and enjoys a 100% field of view, something that can't be had from the majority of optical viewfinder equipped cameras at this level. The sensor resolution has not increased from the 16MP of the G6 version, but with the new Venus Engine Processor, still image quality is very good, bearing in mind the small 17.3mm x 13mm Live MOS sensor. It also has an impressive range of ISO sensitivities from 100 to 25600.

*Below Pine forest.
Panasonic DMC-G7
with Lumix G Vario
7-14mm f/4 lens at
14mm, ISO 3200,
1/400sec at f/5.6*

LIKES

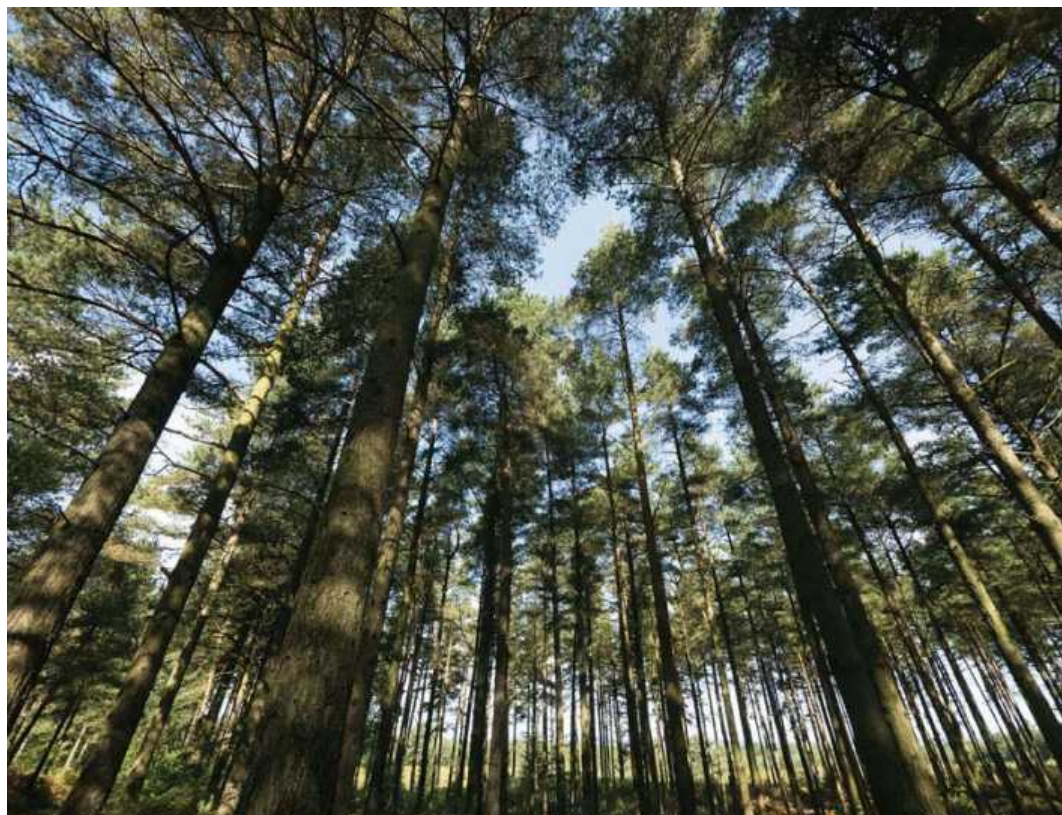
- ✓ Small size
- ✓ 4K video
- ✓ OLED EVF
- ✓ Stills from 4K video
- ✓ Articulating touchscreen

DISLIKES

✗ 16MP is starting to look limited for stills

A key selling point with the G7 is, as the Panasonic literature says, making the world of 4K available to all. Offering 4K at this level of camera is significant, especially as 8MP stills can be taken from the 4K footage, which is big enough to make a decent A4 print. It's easy to capture difficult or unpredictable moments in time too, as afterwards you can simply scroll through 30 frames per second of video to select the frame that captures the precise instant of the action you were after – a real bonus for adventure sports or wildlife photographers.

The focus system of the G7 is very impressive and uses Panasonic's Depth From Defocus (DFD) autofocus technology. Conventional autofocus works by using the contrast in an image, whereas DFD ingeniously uses an inbuilt database, with the known depth of field and bokeh characteristics of all the Panasonic lenses, to achieve perfect focus in record time. This new system has a claimed AF speed of up to 0.07 seconds and enables a very fast burst speed with full AF tracking of seven frames per second, which again is very impressive at this level. The DFD focus





SPECS

Sensor Micro-four-thirds, 16MP

Resolution 4592 x 3448

File formats JPEG, Raw, MPO, AVCHD, MP4

ISO range 100 to 25600

Shutter speeds 1sec to 1/16000sec

Metering system 1728-zone multi-pattern sensing system

HD Movie mode 4K

Monitor 3in, 1,040k dots, fully articulating touchscreen

Flash Built-in TTL GN8

Storage SD Memory Card, SDHC Memory Card, SDXC Memory Card (Compatible with UHS-I/ UHS-II UHS Speed Class 3 Standard SDHC/SDXC Memory Cards)

Connectivity Wi-Fi, USB 2.0, micro HDMI, 2.5mm for Remote, 3.5mm for External Microphone

Size 124 x 86.2 x 77.4mm

Weight 365g (without battery and card)



Common hawk dragonflies (both images).
left Panasonic DMC-G7 with Lumix G Vario 100-300mm f/4-5.6 lens at 300mm, ISO 250, 1/640sec at f/5.6

right Panasonic DMC-G7 with Lumix G Vario 100-300mm f/4-5.6 lens at 223mm, ISO 1600, 1/500sec at f/11

also improves continuous focusing when shooting video.

It is as a hybrid camera that the G7 works best and, in addition to the aforementioned 4K and full HD 1080p recording, Panasonic has made every effort to include other standout features that appeal to stills and video shooters. Among them are focus peaking, a level gauge and a 3.5mm microphone socket, something that is often missing from video-enabled cameras at this level. It's also nice to see that just as you can take stills from video, you can also create video from stills with Time Lapse Shot and Stop Motion Animation features built-in.

Wildlife photographers in particular will also appreciate the silent electronic shutter mode, making this camera ideal for situations where a shutter sound would be intrusive. In addition, 22 creative filters are available to add effects to images in-camera, and the built-in Wi-Fi makes it easy to share

images you have created via social media sites. Panasonic has also included an improved Creative 360° Panorama feature.

VERDICT

It may not be the most striking looking camera but, all in all, the G7 fully matches the expectations that have built in this series since the G1 launched seven years ago. It has an amazing feature set for the money, and the compact body size adds to the attraction of the package. It is of real interest, especially if you are into shooting both stills and video.

RATINGS

Handling	94%
Performance	95%
Specification	94%
Value	94%

OVERALL
94%

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movie mode

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CMOS sensor

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movie mode

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megapixels
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50.6
megapixels
5.0 fps
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CMOS sensor

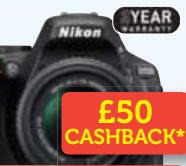
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★★★★★ 'Spectacular Camera'
Charlie Delta - Hertfordshire

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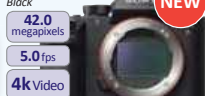


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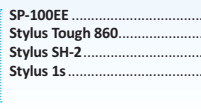


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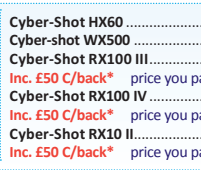


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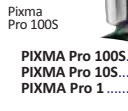
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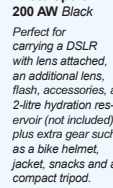


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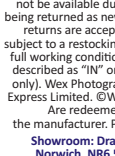
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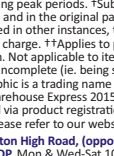
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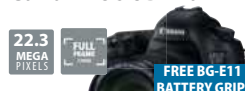
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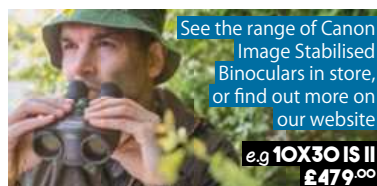


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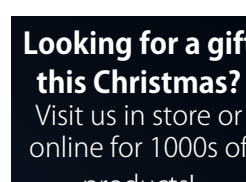
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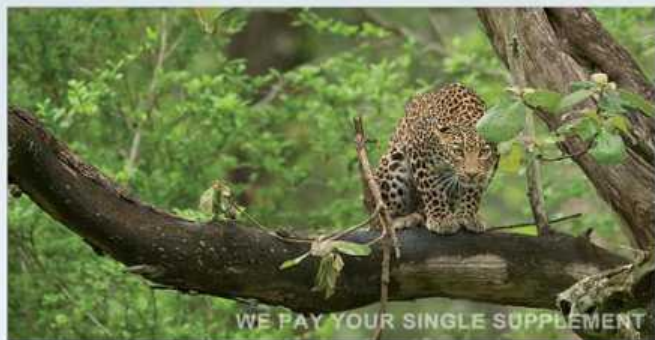
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JANUARY 2016

Ullapool, Suilven, Assynt, Stac Pollaidh · 15th - 20th
5 Night Workshop · £875.00 (Sold Out)

FEBRUARY 2016

Lake District · 5th - 7th
2 nights Dinner, B&B · £475.00 (2 Places)

MARCH 2016

Isle of Skye/Glencoe Winter (Sold Out)

APRIL 2016

Northumberland and Borders · 11th - 14th · 3 Nights DBB · £545.00 (1 Place)
Yorkshire Dales and Coast April · 22nd - 25th · 3 Nights DBB · £645.00 (1 Place)

MAY 2016

Lake District Spring Workshop inc Bluebells and Wildflowers · 6th - 9th
3 nights Dinner, B&B · £595.00 (2 Places)

Ullapool, Suilven, Assynt, Stac Pollaidh · 12th-17th
5 Night Workshop · £875.00 (2 Places)
Email for pick up and parking in Lakes

JUNE 2016

Iceland Glacier, Geysirs Waterfalls and Coast Tour · 17th-27th
10 Night Tour (1 Place left - Max 5)

JULY 2016

Copenhagen Street and Architecture Workshop · 1st - 5th
Includes Flights, Dinner, B&B · £1,495.00 (2 Places - Max 4)

SEPTEMBER 2016

Shetland, Sea Scapes 2016 Tour · 10th - 17th
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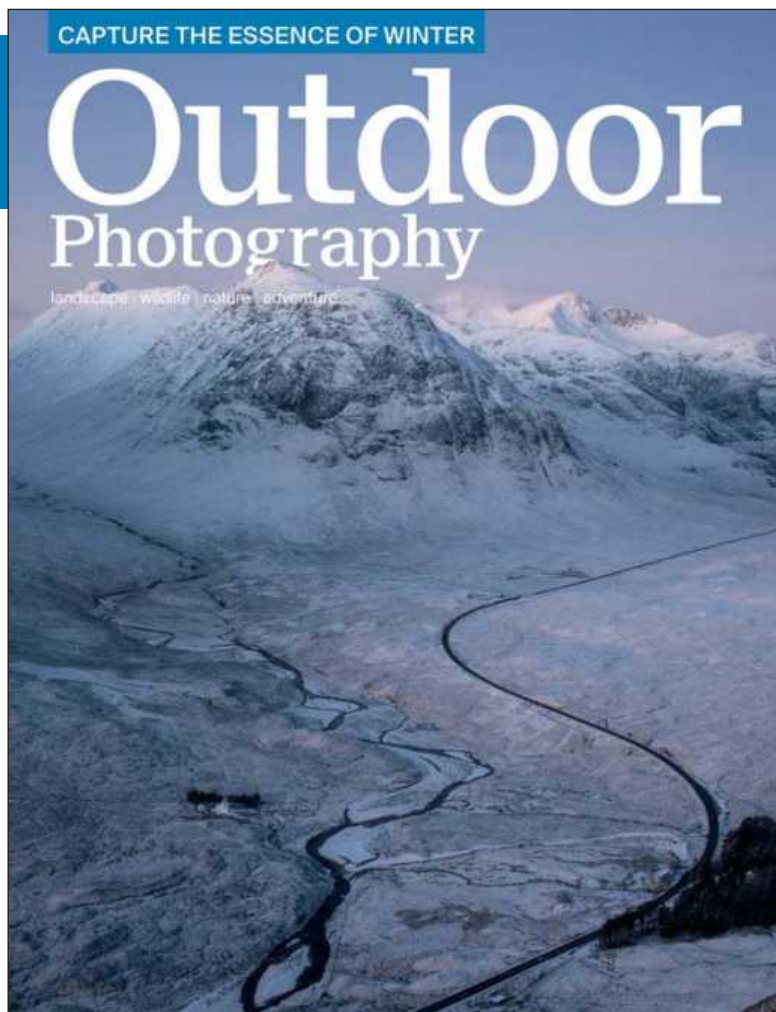
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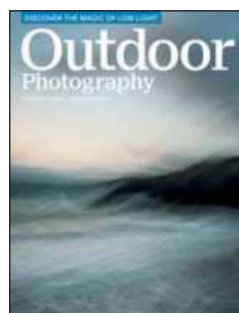
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Golden Eagle Experience in Leicestershire 2016 Dates £99

April 10th, May 8th; Golden Eagle will fly, and perch in carefully chosen natural settings. Jesses hidden for static shots. Controlled flying. Also selection from; Owls, Buzzard, Hawks, Goshawk Max. 8 photographers.

Cheetahs, Lions, Foxes, Birds of Prey, Cambs. £119

April 9th, May 7th; Privileged access to Cheetahs, Bengal Tiger, White Tiger & Corsac Foxes. The Cheetah & Tiger enclosures are not mowed for enhanced photographic opportunities. Private Displays by various Birds of Prey, both static & flying. Jesses hidden for static shots. Barn Owl, Eagle Owl and Red-Tailed Hawk etc.

Amazing Bat Photos & Learn Fill-in Flash Techniques £139

April 14th, 15th; Oxfordshire. We will concentrate on the Bats first. Take amazing bat photos. Practice fill-in flash on many other wildlife subjects in different lighting conditions. Max 4 persons. We are most happy to lend you a Canon digital camera and flash unit for the day. Indoor exhibits make weather conditions irrelevant.

Big Cats at WHF, Smarden in Kent £155

April 2nd, April 23rd, April 30th; Up close to African Lions, Bengal + Siberian + Sumatran Tigers, Serval, Cheetah, Pumas, Jungle Cat, Amur & Snow Leopards, Black Leopards, Clouded Leopards, Fishing Cat. Large open enclosures. UK's most popular photo workshop. Really special photo opportunities from just inches away. Two sets of Lion Cubs born July & August 2013. Huge natural enclosure. Max 12 clients.

Big Cats at WHF, Smarden in Kent

- Specialist event for just 6 photographers - includes Jaguar £199

March 31st, April 1st, 22nd, 29th; Full day as above, but with additional space at each enclosure. Time is also put aside to review your photos at lunchtime. One to one tuition throughout this very special day. You will see all the animals as above and you will have more personal interaction with the cats. Now including Jaguar.

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Gorillas & African Safari Experience, Port Lympne £155

April 3rd, 24th, May 1st, 2nd; 3 gorilla sessions. No wires, fences or bars throughout the day. Clean backgrounds plus Privileged Access. Photograph at eye level over moat. Huge male silverbacks + family group. Private VIP Safari for 2.5 hours. Rhinos, Wildebeest, Eland, Zebras, Giraffes, Buffalo, Ostriches, various Deer.

Birds of Prey Workshop, Bedford £99

April 16th, 17th; Private flying displays on pre-determined flightpath helps you to focus on birds in flight. Excellent opportunities with carefully chosen backgrounds. Also static shots in outstanding natural locations. Jesses carefully hidden. This location boasts one of the largest collections of Birds of Prey in the UK. White tailed Sea Eagle, Bald Eagles, Hawks, Owls, Falcons, Kestrels, Buzzards and Long Eared Owl (new).

Foxes, Otters, Wildcats, Badgers & more, Surrey. £145

July 13th, 14th, 15th; Inside enclosures 'til sunset. Also Owls, Snakes, Badgers, Polecats, Weasels, Stoats, Hedgehog, Harvest Mice & various Deer. Possibly England's longest established photographic venue. 2 sessions with the foxes, sometimes only inches away from you. Time is spent inside enclosures with Foxes, Otters, Scottish Wildcats. Badgers GUARANTEED. No fences or wires to shoot through for any subject today.

Small Cats Workshop, Welwyn, Herts. £99

April 4, 25, 28; Privileged access to Snow Leopards, Amur Leopards, Pumas, Caracal, Leopard Cat, Lynx, Servals, Golden Cat. As featured on recent series of TV programs on Animal Planet. Small groups. Tuition

Bass Rock Gannets £225

June 5th, 12th, 20th, 23rd; Private boat. Exclusive use of island for just 10 photographers. 50,000 pairs of nesting gannets on one small island. 4.5 hours photography. Amazing close-ups & fantastic flight shots. Large crate of fish fed to gannets as they dive into the sea. An amazing sight that you will never forget.

Gannets diving off Bass Rock £99

June 24th; Fantastic new workshop for 2014. We sail round Bass Rock without landing on the island. A whole hour of throwing fish into the sea for the Gannets to catch. Amazing diving shots. 1,000 + dives. Tuition.

Farne Islands Puffins (Over 5 hrs photography) £89

June 4th, 11th, 17th, 25th; 20 species of birds. 50,000 puffins. Guillemots, Razorbills, Shag, Arctic Tern colony etc. You will get unbelievably close to some of the species. Get that much sought after shot of Puffins with their beaks crammed full of sand eels. Tips and Tuition. Approximately 5 hours photography.

Pro Birds of Prey Shoot, Bamburgh, Northumberland. £139

June 18th, 19th; Amazing photography opportunities. Hill top views overlooking large extensive valleys and seascapes. Rocks and gorse bushes abound. Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Snowy Owl, Eagle Owl and Barn Owl will be placed in really natural situations. Jesses will be hidden where possible for those perfect "in the wild" shots. Can combine with Bass/Farne as this location is very close to the Farne Islands.

Pro Birds of Prey Shoot (2), Bamburgh, Northumberland. £139

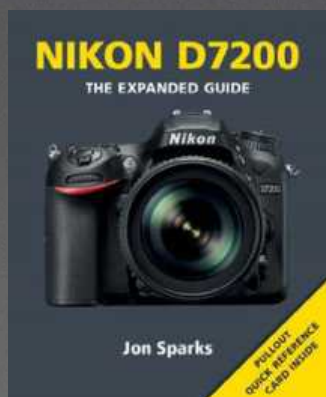
June 14th, 21st, 27th; Both the falconer and the birds are different to workshop above. Venues are about 20 miles apart. We will take two of the birds down to an amazingly beautiful, little known waterfall. This will provide a unique backdrop for your subjects. The falls are surrounded by trees covered with mosses and lichens. We will photograph up to 10 different species of birds, mainly British. Maximum 8 photographers.



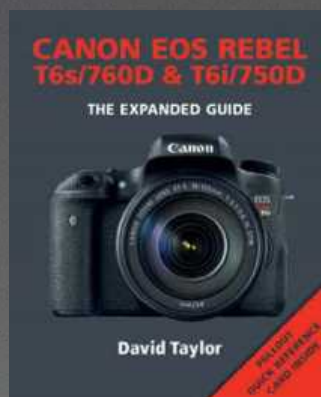
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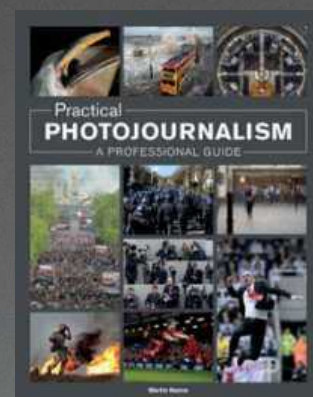
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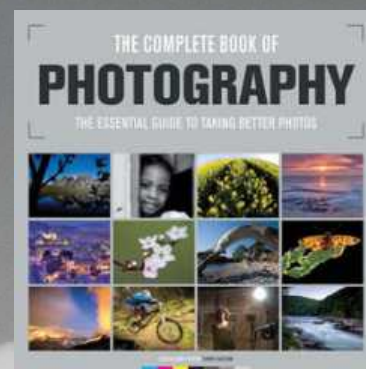
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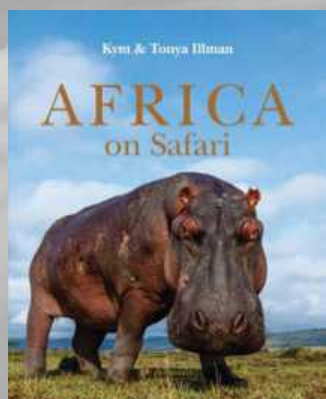
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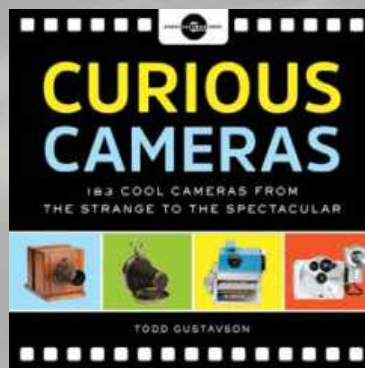
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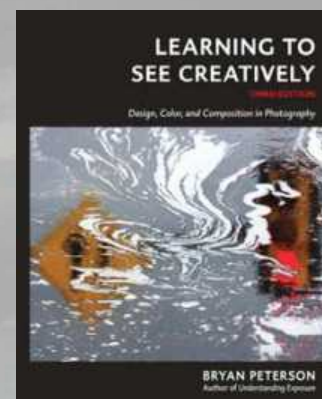
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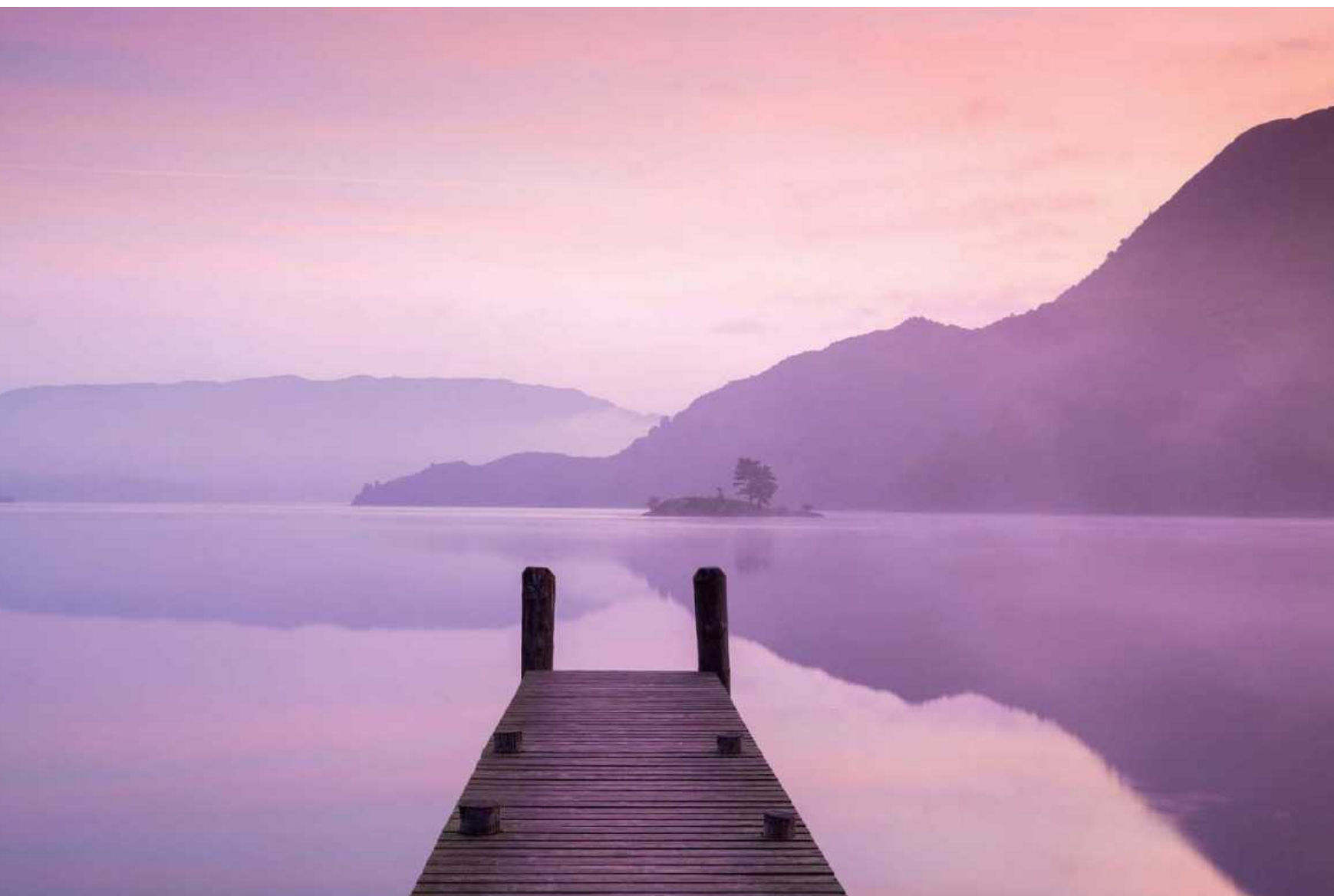
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CLASSIFIEDS

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING THIS MONTH...

Dawn and sunrise

In our September issue we invited you to send us your best landscape photographs taken around dawn and sunrise, and you certainly captured the magic of this wonderful time of day. Here's the winner of the Coleman Cortes tent, and our nine runners-up



WINNER

Pod Parton

(above) During a visit to the Lake District and Scotland last September, I stopped at Ullswater for four nights. After taking some shots on previous mornings, an early start caught some beautiful light over the lake. With the pastel colours and mist on the hills, it looked perfect. Canon EOS 5D MkII with EF 24-105mm lens at 47mm, ISO 100, 4sec at f/16, Lee 2-stop ND grad, tripod

John Harrison Jr

(opposite, top) Despite being very busy most of the time, Lulworth Cove in Dorset is one of my favourite coastal locations; if you get up early enough it is a truly magical place. The angle of the bay makes it perfect for glimpsing a memorable, breaking dawn, with the waters of the cove gradually being illuminated by the rising sun. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon L 17-40mm lens at 17mm, ISO 400, 1/6sec at f/8, ND grad, cable release, tripod johnharrisonjr.co.uk

Martin Birks

(opposite, below) Herringfleet Mill, Suffolk. I'd wanted to visit this location again, and after a day of showers, and with a cold night predicted, I thought there would be a good chance of mist. At 3.30am, I headed to the mill in the dark. It was an eerie walk through woodland and marshes, but a beautiful scene was revealed as the sun rose. Nikon D810 with Tamron 24-70mm f/2.8 VC lens at 24mm, ISO 64, 2.5sec at f/11, -0.7 exposure bias, remote release, tripod martinbirksphotography.co.uk





Catherine Bullen

(left) Taken early one morning in St Lucia, South Africa; I wanted to capture a simple image taking in the beautiful colours of the sky.
Nikon D300 with Sigma 10-20mm lens at 17mm, ISO 100, 1/30sec at f/16
catherinebullen.co.uk

Curtis Welsh

(below) With their quaint architecture and fishing boats, the many old harbours of the north-east coast of the Moray Firth in Scotland are magnets for photographers. On this spring morning, the tide was out at Portsoy harbour and I was able to walk across the dry seabed, camera in hand. This red boat was very eye-catching and, as the sun rose, the colour was further enhanced. I set up my tripod and took many images at the critical point when it was lit to the full.
Olympus OMD EM1 camera with Olympus 9-16mm lens at 9mm, ISO 200, 1/20sec at f/13, tripod
curtiswelshphotography.co.uk





David Shawe

(above) Corfe Castle, Dorset. This must be one of the most photographed dawn locations in England, but on this late September morning you could see why. From the moment I arrived, the first signs of mist were appearing over the fields, and by the time I was halfway up West Hill, conditions were near perfect. Many shots were taken before and after sunrise as the mist formed, creating constantly changing patterns around the castle.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon EF 24-105mm f/4 L lens at 60mm, ISO 100, 1/15sec at f/11, Lee 2-stop ND grad (hard), tripod
davidshawephotography.com

Graham Hobbs

(right) Milnerton in South Africa is a little south of where the classic views of Table Mountain are photographed, but it has a lot to be said for it. I was only there for a couple of nights but I was lucky enough for my early morning stroll along the beach to be rewarded with this beautiful winter sunrise.

Pentax K-3 with Pentax-DA 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 AL WR lens at 30.6mm, ISO 100, 1/10sec at f/14, tripod
grahamhobbs.co.uk







Tony Shaw

(opposite, top) The image was taken early one morning in May, near the village of San Quirico in the Val d'Orcia, Tuscany. This was my third visit to the region; every dawn seems to produce something different.

Sony A900 with Sony 70-200mm lens at 140mm, ISO 200, 1/30sec at f/11, Lee polariser, Vanguard BBH-300 ball head, Gitzo tripod
tonyshawphotos.co.uk

Graham Travis

(opposite, bottom) I took this picture in late April at Friars Crag on Derwentwater in the Lake District. I walked the short distance from the lakeside car park, mounted my camera on a tripod and waited for sunrise. I set focus to manual and, using live view, focused a third of the way into the scene. When the rising sun created interesting light upon the trees and the bench, I triggered the remote release.

Canon EOS 6D with Canon EF 16-35mm L IS lens at 16mm, ISO 100, 1/4sec at f/14, Lee 0.6 ND grad (hard), polariser, tripod

Mark Helliwell

(above) Perch Rock lighthouse, New Brighton, Merseyside. I arrived just before 5am to catch a sunrise shot, knowing that the sun would rise over the Mersey. I hadn't intended to include the docks in the picture, but there was much more drama in the sky above them than to the west of the lighthouse, and the waves were rolling in with some force, adding good foreground detail.

Nikon D810 with Nikkor 24-70mm lens at 24mm, ISO 64, 1/8sec at f/8, 3-stop ND grad (soft), tripod
markhelliwell.com

YOUR NEXT CHALLENGE

Winter landscapes

Many landscape photographers would pick winter as their favourite season, and it's not hard to see why. Whether the weeks ahead bring snow and ice, rain and gales, or a mixture of everything, there's no shortage of drama at this time of year. In addition to the extreme weather conditions, the sun is lower in the sky, often making for stunning light, and the shorter days mean you don't have to be out mega early or late to shoot

sunrise or sunset. So, whether you choose to capture the grandeur or a huge vista or focus on the smaller details within a scene, we want to see your best landscape images that capture the beauty of this wonderful season. We can't wait to see your shots!

Before you venture out into the cold, be sure to read Robert Birkby's insightful technique feature on page 26 (and don't forget to wrap up warm).

Enter and you could win an Aclima 400g HotWool Jacket worth £109.95

The winner of the 'winter landscapes' challenge will not only have their image published in the April 2016 issue of OP, but will also receive an Aclima 400g HotWool Jacket, worth £109.95. Designed for Scandinavian winters, the jacket is a perfect reinforcement or mid-layer during low-level activity. While most similar products are made from different types of fleece, the HotWool Jacket

consists mostly of wool, meaning it provides excellent insulation even in wet conditions. The jacket has two front pockets, thumb holes and a flap to prevent the zip from chafing against the neck. Aclima products are available to buy from Nordic Outdoor in the UK. For more information, visit nordicoutdoor.co.uk



Closing date for entries is 20 January 2016

See page 84 for an entry form and our terms and conditions.



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Where in the world?

If you can name this wonderful valley in a remote national park, you could soon be the winner of an excellent Lundhags Greij jacket worth £189.95!

NEW! ONLINE ENTRY

Where is it?

The photograph shows a stunning river valley. But is it:

- a) Sun Kosi, Tibet/Nepal
- b) Tutoko, New Zealand
- c) Rapadalen, Sweden

The correct answer and the winner's name will be published in OP202 (on sale 11 February 2016). **Enter online at outdoorphotographymagazine.co.uk/c/where199**, or send your answer to opcomp@thegmcgroup.com, stating 'River valley' as the subject, or drop it in the post to: Where in the world – 'River valley', OP, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN.

Deadline for entry is midnight on 5 January 2016.

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AUTUMN ISSUE WINNER

In OP196 we asked you to name the photogenic mountain town. The correct answer is:

c) Stowe, USA



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The winner of the Aku Tribute II GTX boots is Pete Beadman, who entered via email. Congratulations, Pete, your prize will be with you shortly!



Student, Nigel Haworth

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